

***“Lost in the Pacific”***

***Biography of***

***TSgt. Paul Fredrick Adler***  
***MIA 1943***

***by***

***Paul Earl Adler***

***August 20, 2010***

## Dedication

This biography of **TSgt. Paul F. Adler** is dedicated to “**Til,**” his wife **Mrs. Matilda M. Adler**, my Mom, who never remarried nor gave up hope in her heart that he might someday be found.

And also to his descendants, his only grandchild **Mrs. Anneliese Adler Jones** and her children and to his nieces and nephews and their children, in the hope that they may know a little about their grandfather, great grandfather, uncle and grand uncle...

... a true war hero who was Lost in the Pacific.



**TSgt. Paul Fredrick Adler**

***“Lost in the Pacific”***  
*Biography of*  
***TSgt. Paul Fredrick Adler***

T.Sgt.



Service No. 6147915 (MIA)  
Born: May 16, 1918  
City of Somerville  
County of Middlesex  
Common-Wealth of Massachusetts



Silver  
Star



Air  
Medal



Distinguished  
Flying  
Cross



Flight  
Engineer



Purple  
Heart



7<sup>th</sup> Army Air Corps  
11<sup>th</sup> Bomber Group – Heavy  
42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron  
Hickam Field, Hawaii

***“Lost in the Pacific”***  
***Biography of***  
***TSgt. Paul Fredrick Adler***

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## *Preface*

“Lost in the Pacific” is herein referred to as a biography, however, I like to think of it more as a story. A story of a very young man who leaves home (Somerville, MA) to serve his country. War breaks out and he finds himself in a far away land (Hawaii) only to be caught in the middle of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He falls in love with a local girl, “Til,” they marry and make plans for the future, then he is reported as missing in action in an even farther land (Solomon Islands) on the same day that his only child is born ... never to fulfill his dreams.

In 1943 the U. S. was at war, some fathers, mothers and wives received heart-breaking telegrams from the War Department informing them that their son or husband had been reported as Missing In Action (**MIA**), as my grandparents and mother did. Their shock was exceeded only by the lack of details and they immediately were in denial. What happened, when and where they asked. Eventually they would receive more details from the War Department’s “A-2 Report” which describes the events or circumstances that presumably took the life of their loved one.

Of course, this document was not enough to satisfy them and bring closure, there simply had to be more information available. They tried to make contact with the families of their son’s buddies to learn more, as my grandfather did. Three or so years would go by before they received a letter of sympathy from the “U.S.Army Air Force, Pacific,” signed by one **General Douglas MacArthur**, as my grandfather received. In 1946 they all received a notice of a final declaration of death. Many more years passed before they forced themselves into acceptance, even if only outwardly, as my grandparents did and my mother has done.

By 2010, decades have passed before a son, brother, sister or nephew of the MIA family member asks themselves the same questions. What happened, when and where? But now things are different. Although the War Department records are essentially the same as they were 67 years ago (or “missing due to a fire”), our generation has the internet at their disposal to find other relatives of MIAs and compare notes, documents, photos, etc.

The following story (biography) of **T/Sgt. Paul Fredrick Adler**, my father, consists of information gathered from various sources.

Personal information comes from photos, a scrapbook that my mother kept for dad, and dad’s wartime letters given to me by my grandmother. Information relating to dad’s boyhood days came primarily from his only sister, dear Aunt Hazel Wilson.

An “A2 Report” is a document of the U. S. Army Air Force Intelligence Unit. The report is an “abridged” version of “Appendix E, a Complete report of the Second Element – Bombing Mission 1 February 1943.” “The appendix is the most complete and accurate extant report based on interviews with the pilots and crew of Capt. Thomas’s plane.” The appendix E is the “**A2 Periodic Report**”, 21 January 1943 – 28 February 1943.

Letters uncovered after 65 years, which were written by two fathers of dad’s crew, raise interesting questions of the crews’ final demise, however, the information can not be verified. (**Appendix 13**)

An investigative report (AG-704 April 27, 1949), while concluding that there is insufficient evidence to determine a direct cause of death, does admit that it was well known that many airmen in the area were rescued by the enemy and taken prisoners. Only this section of the AG-704 is quoted in this text, so as not to confuse the last mission’s location, etc. with that of the A2 Periodic Report.

## **- Brotherhood of B-17 No. 41-9151 Crew Members' Families -**

In March of 2008 as I was searching the Internet for information on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq. I happened across a site posted by **Gregg Heilman** who was also seeking "contact" with members of the 42<sup>nd</sup>. His father, **TSgt. Raymond A. Heilman** was also in the **42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq.** and survived the war. Gregg informed me of "The Biography of Earl O. Hall" written by his brother Hal W. Hall, which is posted on the Texas A&M University Library's website.

The name "Hall" was familiar to me. Mom said that my middle name came from "dad's friend and pilot, Earl Hall... "A wonderful man." After contacting Hal Hall I became aware of the fact that amazingly, relatives of four out of the nine members of Captain Hall's crew and one relative of a crew member from a second aircraft lost on the same mission were in contact through the internet. Now there are five. They are:

### **B-17E No. 41-9151**

Hal W. Hall, brother of **Major Earl Oxford Hall** (Pilot, promoted to Major 4 days after MIA)  
Arnold Guerrero, nephew of **1st Lieutenant Joaquin Castro** (Co-Pilot)  
Paul Stephens, brother of **Staff Sergeant James C. Stephens** (Radio Man/Gunner)  
Scott Olmstead, grand nephew of **Sergeant Jesse N. Olmstead** (Radio Man/Gunner)  
And myself, Paul Earl Adler, son of **TSgt. Paul Fredrick Adler** (Engineer/Gunner)

### **B-17E No. 41-2442 "Yokohama Express"**

Phil Gudenschwager, brother of **T/Sgt. Lester L. Gudenschwager** (Engineer/Gunner)

This "Brotherhood" of relatives of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron members have generously shared photos, documents and insights relating to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, the crew of B-17E No. 41-9151, and especially of its last mission.

It was predominately the work of Hal Hall that produced the chronological events of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron during 1942, up to and including the last mission contained in his biography.

This biography and those of **Capt. Earl Oxford Hall**, **1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Joaquin Castro** and **Staff Sergeant James C. Stephens Jr.** are located on the Texas A&M website at:

<http://repository.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/85699>

I am sincerely grateful to them, especially to Hal W. Hall for permission to use his work in this, the biography and story of my dad, **TSgt. Paul F. Adler**.

## - Source of Personal Information -

Unfortunately I never knew my father and except for photos of his younger years, I knew very little about what he was like as a young boy, his growing up years, or even his family who lived in Massachusetts while I lived in Hawaii.

I had always intended to write a biography of my dad, however, there were large lapses of information without which his story would be incomplete.

A few of my cousins have provided bits and pieces of information relating to dad, through their parents, which has helped me to have a better understanding of his family and background before entering the service.

In the past two years I've become more acquainted with these cousins with whom I've had very little communication with for much too long. We began sharing photos and stories of our parents, our Uncles and one Aunt, and I decided to place dad's biography project on hold and to create "The Adler Family Album" on the Internet for ourselves and future generations.

As a result, I now know a little more about my dad's growing up years and what he was like as a boy/young man. All of his brothers and his sister (my Uncles and Aunt) are gone now, which fills me with regret that I didn't start this biography many years ago.

My dad and mom (**Matilda M. Adler – Nobriga**) knew each other for three years, and were married for one year during WWII. Needless to say, dad was away from home (**Hickam Field, Hawaii**) for most of the time serving in the South Pacific.

I am grateful to my cousins who have shared information and photos with me regarding the Adler Family, especially concerning my dad.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/MASSadlers>

## Biography: 1918 to 1943

### - Boyhood -

**Paul Fredrick Adler** (1918 – 1943) was born on May 16, 1918 in the City of Somerville, Massachusetts ... along with his fraternal twin brother, **Karl Edwin Adler** (1918 – 2006).



**1920 “The Twins” at 2 years old. Paul is on the left.**

“The Twins” were the youngest and last children of **Alfred Andrew Adler** (1875 – 1961) and **Esther Nelson (Adler)** (1879 – 1965).

Two other brothers, **Donald Nelson Adler** (1910 – 1998) and **Robert Alfred Adler** (1913 – 2005) as well as one sister, **Hazel Esther Adler (Wilson)** (1908 – 2009) made up the rest of the family.

Paul’s father was born in Clinton, MA the son of German immigrants. Paul’s mother was born in Glomminge Village, Kalmar County, on the island of Oland, Sweden.

According to his sister Hazel, Paul was named after a Dr. Frederick Ilsley, a general practitioner in Medford, MA, next to Somerville. His brother, Karl was named after a Dr. Edwin Healy, an eye, ear, nose, and throat doctor, who would often accompany Dr. Ilsley.

Dr. Ilsley delivered all of the Adler children. Apparently Grandma Adler was crazy about him! When she saw Dr. Ilsey, she felt "relief," she used to say!





**The Adler Family: Robert, Donald, Hazel, Esther and Alfred, Karl and Paul, the Twins are in the foreground. 1920**

There was a terrible flu epidemic (influenza) in 1918. In 1919, the twins came down with it and thoroughly exhausted Nana (grandma) who developed pleurisy. The doctor recommended country air and rest. A spot called Wildacre near Percy Road in Lexington was just the place. After a two-week stay, it was decided to move the entire clan to Lexington in May of 1922. A rental property was secured at 16 Parker Street. Considering that worldwide, 50 million people died during the epidemic, the twins were very fortunate.

Lexington Park, on the Lexington/Bedford town line was a popular destination on Sundays for families seeking relief from the city. The Adlers would ride an open trolley car to Lexington Park, sort of an amusement park and zoo together. That's sort of how the family ended up in Lexington.

After a year, the landlord, Mr. Manley, decided not to renew the lease on the grounds that the twins had broken windows in his chicken coop! He actually wanted the property for another family member. Hazel had to finish 7th grade in Somerville, so every day she would take the trolley to Arlington Heights, transfer to a trolley to Arlington Center, then to a trolley to Teele Square in Somerville. She was only thirteen years old! She had to repeat a year after missing so much school to whooping cough.

Grand father Adler was able to purchase a home on Bedford Street at the corner of Hill Street. The family went to Hancock School from grades one to eight. Aunt Hilda Nilson, Grandma Adlers' sister, had moved to Bedford Street, as well.

**One day she saw the twins walking home for lunch and Karl was crying. "What are you crying for, Karl?" asked Aunt Hilda. "Paul's got a headache," Karl replied.**

After six years on Bedford Street, the family moved to 12 Berwick Road on August 1, 1930. By this time Aunt Hilda had married Harry Regan and moved to California. Grandma was most proud of this residence. Can you imagine a family of seven in a house with one bath?

I can also only imagine what a blow it must have been when Grandpa Adler lost his job and the Berwick Road home, and the family fell on hard times that were so common during the Depression (1929 – 1939). Grandpa Adler's **Spanish American War** pension was such a thin lifeline for their survival in those later years, but a lifeline none the less.

Aunt Hazel said that times were hard but Papa always provided and Nana made some great meals. Aunt Hazel had one of the few jobs available and provided support to her family. Donald, the oldest son, had a part time job at a gas station across town.

All the boys had jobs. Grandpa was not happy that it was an effort to get Karl to mow his own lawn, but he cheerfully mowed the Frost's lawn often. As it happened, Karl did end up marrying **Mirian Frost**.

One day a man came in with a fluffy, white puppy for sale for \$1.50. Donald bought the puppy and brought it home to his mother. Donald bought it to cheer up Nana because Robert had gone to California to stay with Aunt Hilda and Harry while he went to school there.

For many years, Grandma and Grandpa would walk down Castle Road, then a cinder path, past the "Castle" to the train in Lexington center to work in Boston.

Aunt Hazel recalls the twins were enchanted with Mr. Frank McPeake and his Indian motorcycle. Frank is also reported to have taken the twins on their first plane ride at around the age of eight!



**1926**  
**8 year Old**



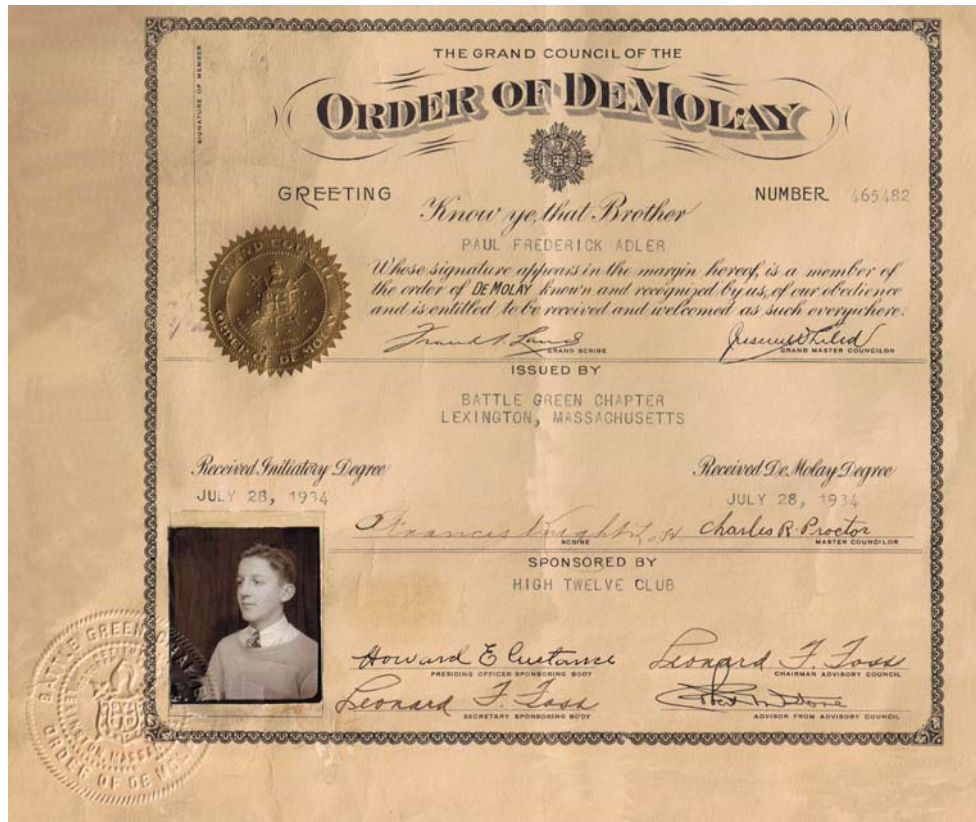
**1942**  
**24 year Old**

It is interesting that all the Adler boys seemed to develop passionate interests --- art and history (Donald, the oldest), riding and the West (Robert, second oldest), sailing (Karl) and horses, flying and tennis (Paul). The Adler home must have bustled and buzzed with all that energy and enthusiasm

When Uncle Karl talked about his family, he described how Grandpa was very much in charge and everyone had their chores with the expectation that they would be done. In short Uncle Karl respected his father's leadership. All of the children adored their mother, Grandma Adler. They respected her desire to "better" the family and her aspirations to be a ladylike person.



Paul and his brother Karl both were accepted into the order of DeMolay, Battle Creek Chapter. DeMolay is sort of a teenage Masonic order.

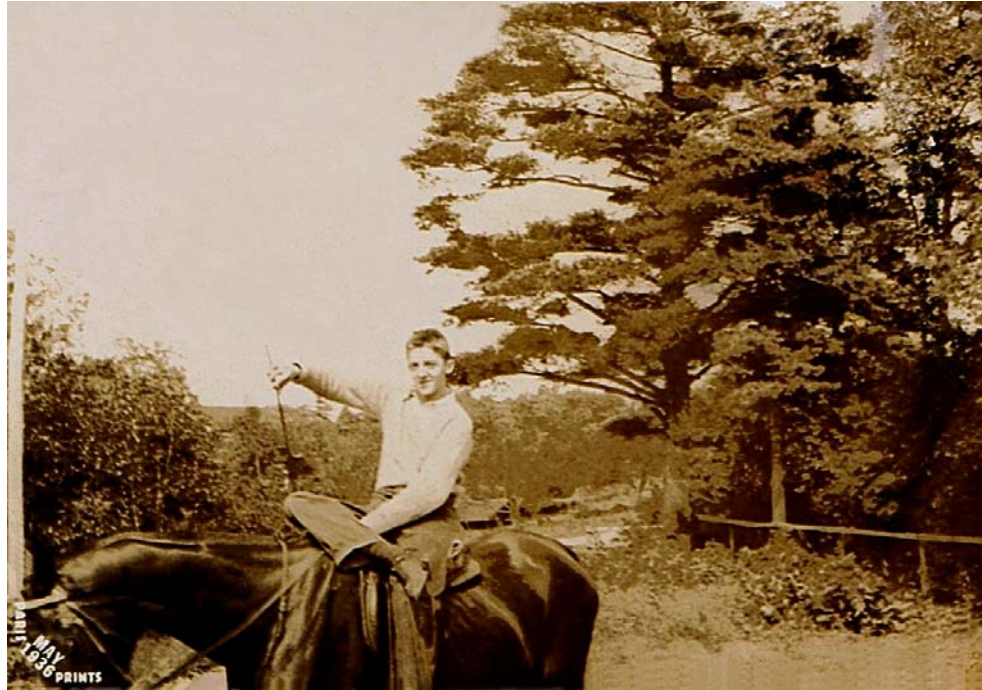


### Order of DeMolay, 1934

Aunt Hazel’s recollections of Paul were limited, however she did remember his love of horses, his great expertise as an equestrian, and his acceptance into Lexington's high society. He apparently was quite social. He was a Riding Academy Instructor which had him hobnobbing with the Lexington Hunt Club, populated by very wealthy locals and he was well accepted by the “High Society.”

Dad was also a member of Boy Scout Troop 22 of Hancock Church, participated in the Young People’s activities of the Church and was a member of the Boy’s Choir.

Dad's equestrian abilities were such that he was selected more than once to play the part of "Paul Revere," riding from Boston (Hanover Street) to Lexington. A reenactment of Paul Revere's ride preformed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in celebration of Independence Day.



**Paul Riding, May 1936**

Dad shared light brown eye color with his father and his brother, Robert. The rest of his siblings had blue eyes. His hair was blond as a young child. Aunt Hazel described him as so cute, he could be mistaken for a girl! The Adlers' are fair of skin, reflecting their Nordic/Slavic heritage.

Aunt Hazel explained that dad and his brothers were well behaved. Times were tough, so there wasn't a lot of room for misbehavior. Aunt Hazel did stress the love her brothers had for their mother. She also said grandpa would not tolerate any shenanigans! He was a stern taskmaster!

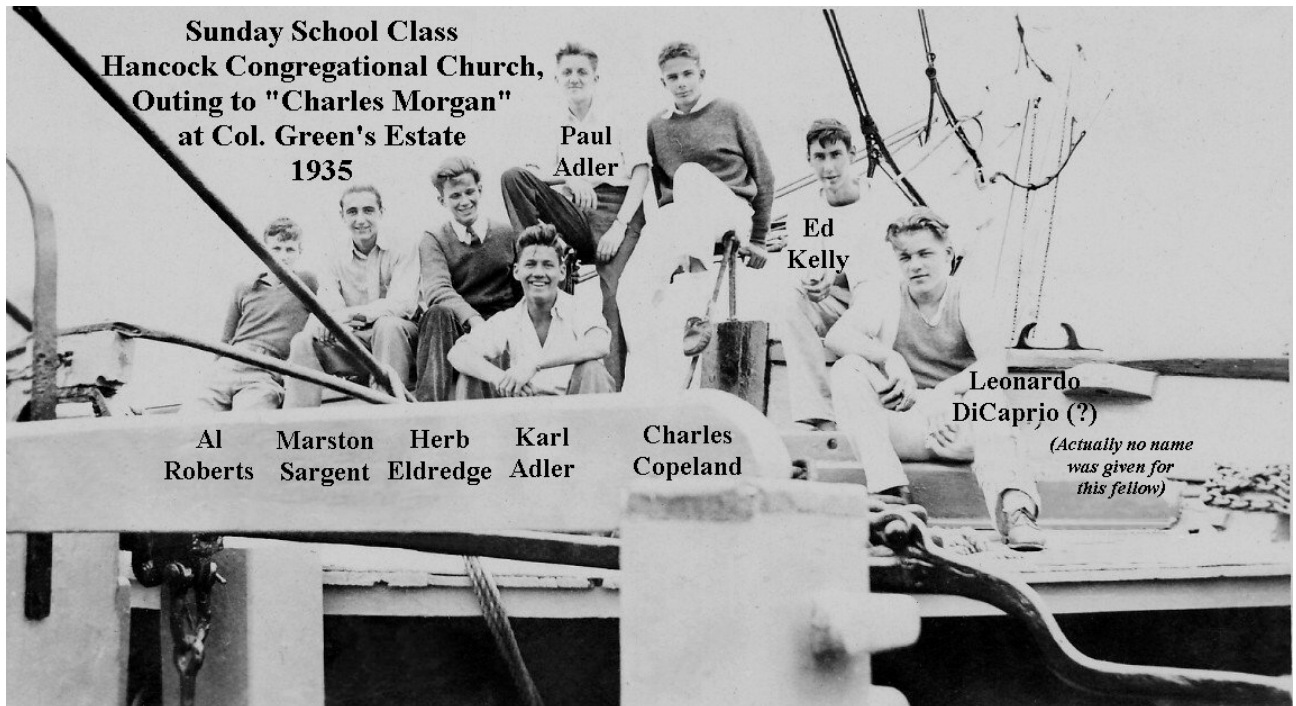
Aunt Hazel's son **Bart Wilson** lived close to Uncle Karl and knew him well. Cousin Bart likes to think of my dad, Paul, as similar to his twin brother (Karl) in many ways; greatly admired for his warmth, love of his sister, humor, extreme talent as a master woodworker (Karl), and his love of his twin brother Paul.

Bart relates: "Your Dad was a very close second in my mind. I was quite moved by the letters I saw recently. His name is on a plaque in **Hancock Church** and I frequently point it out to other church members with pride."





**1935 Lexington High School Tennis Team**  
**Paul (17 years old) is standing on the right, second to the last.**



**Sunday School Class  
 Hancock Congregational Church,  
 Outing to "Charles Morgan"  
 at Col. Green's Estate  
 1935**

**Paul  
 Adler**

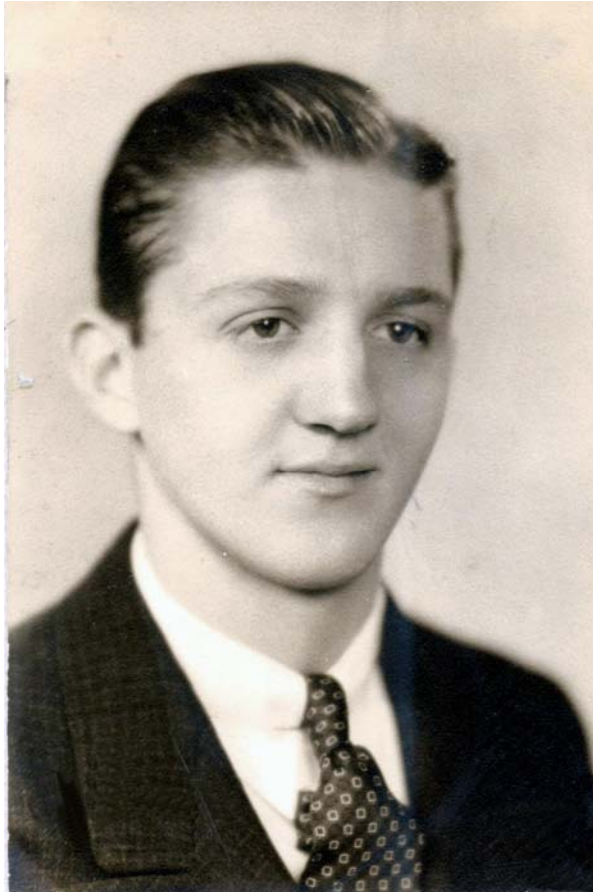
**Ed  
 Kelly**

**Leonardo  
 DiCaprio (?)**

*(Actually no name  
 was given for  
 this fellow)*

**Al Marston Herb Karl  
 Roberts Sargent Eldredge Adler**

**Charles  
 Copeland**



**Lexington High School  
Paul F. Adler - Graduation Picture 1938**

In May of 1938 the **Lexington School** Department's Superintendent thanked dad for training the school's Color Guards at the Parker and Hancock schools. His instructional abilities would serve him well in the military.

All of dad's friends that weren't in college were joining the services. With his parents not being able to send him to college, he decided to join the service to better himself.

Aunt Hazel often talked of the day in June of 1939 while the family was living at Pitcher Avenue with Uncle Ejner, when Paul left home and never returned ...

## Father and Three Sons in Wars

U. S. Army – infantry, Spanish American War. Battle of San Juan Hill, Puerto Rico, 1898

**Alfred Andrew  
(Grandpa) Adler**



**Robert Alfred Adler  
Survived the war**



U. S. Army Air Corp – WWII, aerial gunner, B-17 Flying Fortress. After several missions over Germany, his inner ear was badly damaged and was taken off flight status and transferred to a tank and artillery unit under General Douglas MacArthur. He landed at Utah Beach on D-Day and was in the Battle of the Bulge, Ardienne Forest.

He told his family the reason he wanted to be a B-17 gunner was because his little brother Paul was one.

U. S. Navy – WWII, Trained in Detroit to be a ship carpenter's mate and spent time in Newport News, VA, near Williamsburg, repairing ships at the docks. For the majority of the war he served on a tanker in the Pacific as it went on refueling missions.

His most memorable moment was being at anchor in Tokyo Bay close enough to see the Japanese delegation coming out to formally surrender on the **USS Missouri**. He severed on the **USS Alcor**, 3rd Division and the **USS Wisconsin**.



**Karl Edwin Adler  
Survived the war**

**Paul Fredrick Adler  
Missing in Action**



U. S. Army Air Corp – WWII, flight engineer/gunner, B-17 Flying Fortress. Mechanic's Instructor at Hickam Field, Hawaii during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Was in the Battle of Midway, volunteered for flying status as a flight engineer/gunner on Captain Hall's crew in the South Pacific. Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Silver Star.

Reported Missing in Action on Feb. 1, 1943 along with the rest of the crew.

Donald Adler, dad's oldest brother, was not in the service. He had a critical job with General Electric, designing America's first jet engines.

## - Source of Paul's War Time Letters -

From the time dad left home to enlist in the military in June of 1939 he continuously wrote letters home to his mother (**Esther Nelson Adler**) (1879 – 1965). Fortunately she kept those letters, including the envelopes in a safe place. There are 38 letters - most are more than 5 pages long which were mailed with 2 or 3 cent stamps.

Having been born and raised in Hawaii I never did have a chance to see either of my dad's parents, however, I remember that Grandma Adler never forgot to send a card for my birthday. Aunt Hazel related that grandma was always concerned that dad's siblings were lacking in remembering that "Paul had a son in Hawaii".

When I was still a baby, Uncle Karl sent me a small stuffed animal, a little lamb, which I still have. Aunt Hazel revealed that it was grandma who sent the lamb to me ... in Uncle Karl's name.

Unfortunately the first time that I ever met any of dad's relatives, most of whom lived in Massachusetts, was when Grandma Adler passed away and my mom somehow was able to gather the funds to send me to her services. I was 18 years old at the time and had never left the Hawaiian Islands before.

It was from dad's brothers, Uncle Donald and Uncle Karl (his fraternal twin) that I started to get to know a little about my father. I regret not having taken notes on their inputs since I don't remember the details of that first visit.

It was also on this, my first visit back "East" that I was given a box full of dad's letters which grandma lovingly saved for 18 years.

The letters have been scanned and filed according to date. Although they say almost nothing at all regarding military activities or locations, they do tell of a son that greatly missed his mother, father, brothers and sister. He was more concerned about their well being than his own even when he was in harm's way. Always advised his mother not to worry.

Dad always assured his mother and father that he was doing fine, learning things that might help him to get a good job when he returned home, and sending her whatever few dollars he could each month to help the family.

I will forever be grateful to Grandma Adler for saving dad's letters. They, of course, enabled me to follow his military service and although I may not be able to express it in the right words, they enabled me to know that dad was a good man, very talented, friendly, respectful and most of all loving.

Dad's letters home, numbering almost 200 pages, are much too numerous to include here. I've attempted to include only items from his letters that reflect his travel, accomplishments, and his character. Dad rarely, if ever, had any complaints.



## - Excerpts from Paul's Letters: 1939 to 1943 -

- 1939 -

June 3, 1939 Dad enlisted in the **Army Air Corps**. At **Fort McArthur, NY** and was assigned to **Co. B, No 6147915**. At 21, dad was 5'11" and weighted 150 lbs.

June 8, 1939 Arrived at **Fort Slocum, NY, 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Co.** Section 3 Bldg. 83-S (Pvt. Paul F. Adler)

June 17, 1939 "... I was complemented for having the neatest uniform, locker and bunk by the company commander. ... I promise to send you \$10.00 every month."

June 19, 1939 "Pa, I still and always shall love and respect you and ma... some how or another I will make you proud of me."

June 29, 1939 "I will sail (to Hawaii) on July 20<sup>th</sup>. I have only this Sat. and next Sat. to come back home before I leave for 2 years. ...so if I get a pass this weekend I will come home for 6 or 7 hours. I think it is worth \$5.40 by train each way..."

July 21, 1939 **The U. S. A. Transport, Hunter Liggett**

"I am feeling fine considering that this is my first time on the high seas... we have been out about 36 hours now and expect to stop at Charleston N S. C. tomorrow. Then we sail on for Cuba then Panama... I felt pretty lousy not being able to see you and pa down at the dock to wave good by. My dear much loved ones, you were swell to me all my life and I shall always be thinking of you no matter where I go. I will arrive in San Francisco on Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>. I will be stationed at Fort McDowell Army Base for five days."

"I had a pass last night... and visited Panama City."

"I arrived in fine shape (**San Francisco**)... I would appreciate it very much if you would kindly send my riding boots, my riding breeches (gray ones) and my leather jacket, also my spurs. . Will depart for Hawaii on Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>."



Aug. 17, 1939

**6th Pursuit Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Section, 18<sup>th</sup> Air Base, Wheeler Field, T.H.**

"I arrived here (**Hawaii**) Tues. 15<sup>th</sup> safe & sound. We were given a choice of study or course and put into different squadrons accordingly. I've chosen air mechanics...we're getting some new **B12s** and **A16s** in next month. ..."B" stands for bomber, "A" for attack & "P" for pursuit ships, etc. The numbers stand for the model including H.P. (horsepower). ...I've signed up for tennis, soccer and riding.

. We can go over to Schofield stables & use the cavalry's horses. I've played tennis every night... I'll try to get in as much flying as possible, therefore I plan to transfer to an attack squadron were the enlisted men are part of the plane crew. When in the air they act as gunners..."



- Sept. 10, 1939 “... with this war going on the future is pretty uncertain. Yes Pa, I got all the latest news about the war here. I heard Pres. Roosevelt, I was thinking of you all around the radio back home. ... I am in about the best place. The island must be kept occupied for protection of the Pacific and air corps. Mechanics don’t get in line of fire unless we are assigned to an attack squadron.”
- Oct. 10, 1939 **17<sup>th</sup> Air Base Squadron, Hickam Field**  
“... I’ve been transferred to Hickam Field... Right now and for the last week I’ve been doing pick and shovel work (digging ditches). You see this field is being built up and in about five years it will be the largest air base in the world. ... I was offered a job as motorcycle dispatcher or permanent MP (police)... Just heard over the radio that France wouldn’t accept Hitler’s peace terms... I guess we’re in for a good world war again. I’ve been up (flying) four times since I’ve been here, twice in a B-18, sat up front were the gunner’s “meat can” is and twice in a B-12. Once in a B-12... we were towing targets for anti-aircraft guns...”
- Oct. 27, 1939 “... still digging ditches... and pulling the old buildings over on Luke Field. We sleep in tents while working at Hickam field. I hope that ear specialist can do some thing for you ma. Listen dear, if you want to use any of that \$50.00 of mine to pay any such bills with you’re welcome to it. By the way dear ones, I listen to Jack Benny’s programs every Sunday at 6:00 ... Yes, Europe is in a pretty bad fix... don’t worry about me ... we might have a little trouble with the Japs but it can’t amount to much.”
- Nov. 8, 1939 “... Hazel & Herb must have liked the World’s Fair in New York ... I was put on a new job as school bus guard for two weeks or so. Then I’ll be given my motorcycle operator’s license and work as a dispatcher.”
- Dec. 5, 1939 “ ... I flew down to Hilo in a C-33 transport ship yesterday and we could see snow on the mountains. Hilo is about 250 miles away so it was an all day trip.”
- Dec. 12, 1939 “... I’ve been down to talk with the Capt. Of a bomb squadron to see if I could transfer into it. If I do get the transfer it will mean that I’ll get to learn something about planes and I might get flying pay which ... I’ll send home to you. ... I just got finished with building myself a little desk by my bunk here. I can study on it and write my letters...”

Jan. 19, 1940

**50<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron. Hickam Field**

“ ... I guess I’ve stopped putting on weight. I work out at the YMCA three days a week, the scales say between 159 – 161 lbs. I was released from special duty as official car driver and motorcycle dispatcher last week. As you know I was transferred to the 50<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron ... and actually working on the B-18s. I’ve been assigned to ship No. 123 and have a swell crew chief... Most every time the ship flies I go up with it. ... The 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant is going to speak to the Squadron commander to see if he will appoint me to the Air Corps tech. School.”

Feb. 17, 1940

**42<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Squadron, Hawaiian Air force, Hickam Field**

“ ... I’ve been transferred again ... a new one and a new group, the 11<sup>th</sup>. They took some of us “experienced men” out of each of the older squadrons, divided us up into three new squadrons thus making our the 11<sup>th</sup> group... I was appointed by my flight chief ... to go to the Air Corps. Tech. School.”

March 4, 1940

“ ... I’ve been made Private First Class. I witnessed a crack up in mid-air yesterday, saw both ships go down and both pilots bail out. They were old P-26s.”

March 28, 1940

“ ... the so called “hula girls” are nothing more than Chinese or Japs with grass skirts... I try to get down to Waikiki and lay around just to get away from it all...”

April 28, 1940

“ ... a fine day of swimming, tennis and speaking to my first movie actress – Dorothy Lamour. . She was in Waikiki for her motion picture “Typhoon” and came out to the field ... I was walking in my swimming trunks and aloha shirt. She asked me how I liked the air Corps., etc.”



May 22, 1940

“ ... Well I’m back on the line now and assigned to a B-18...”

June 3, 1940

“ ... flight chief asked me to teach some classes ... aircraft engines & elementary electricity. On top of that I’ve been an instructor on hydraulic systems. I might come back to Lexington & ask the school board for a job teaching...”

June 3, 1940

“Well the whole island in on “alert” and we were all given automatics ... we may be getting ready for the Japs. All in all I think old Uncle Sam smells something in the wind and isn’t going to be caught with his pants down. I’m still teaching school down at the hanger ... I’m playing #1 singles on the squadron tennis team...”

Aug. 30, 1940

“ ... I’ve been promoted to PFC 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, Specialist ... still playing quite of tennis ... Now the day is ending & night is drawing near soooo ... Papa take care of mama & mama take care of papa.”

Sept. 21, 1940

“ I am now a Corporal (as of Sept. 10, 1940). Well, we all moved out of the old dusty wooden barracks into a brand new million dollar barrack ... Of course we all look forward to getting off this “rock” & getting home to white man’s country.”

Dec. 9, 1940

“ ... Xmas means nothing but just another day out here, but knowing what it means to you all back home, my heart will be right there with you. ... I’ve been picked out, along with another corporal to drill & instruct about 32 or more recruits ... I’m glad Bob has a girl, but in regards to girls, I’ll always say “Give Me a Girl Just Like the Girl that Married Dear Old Dad.”

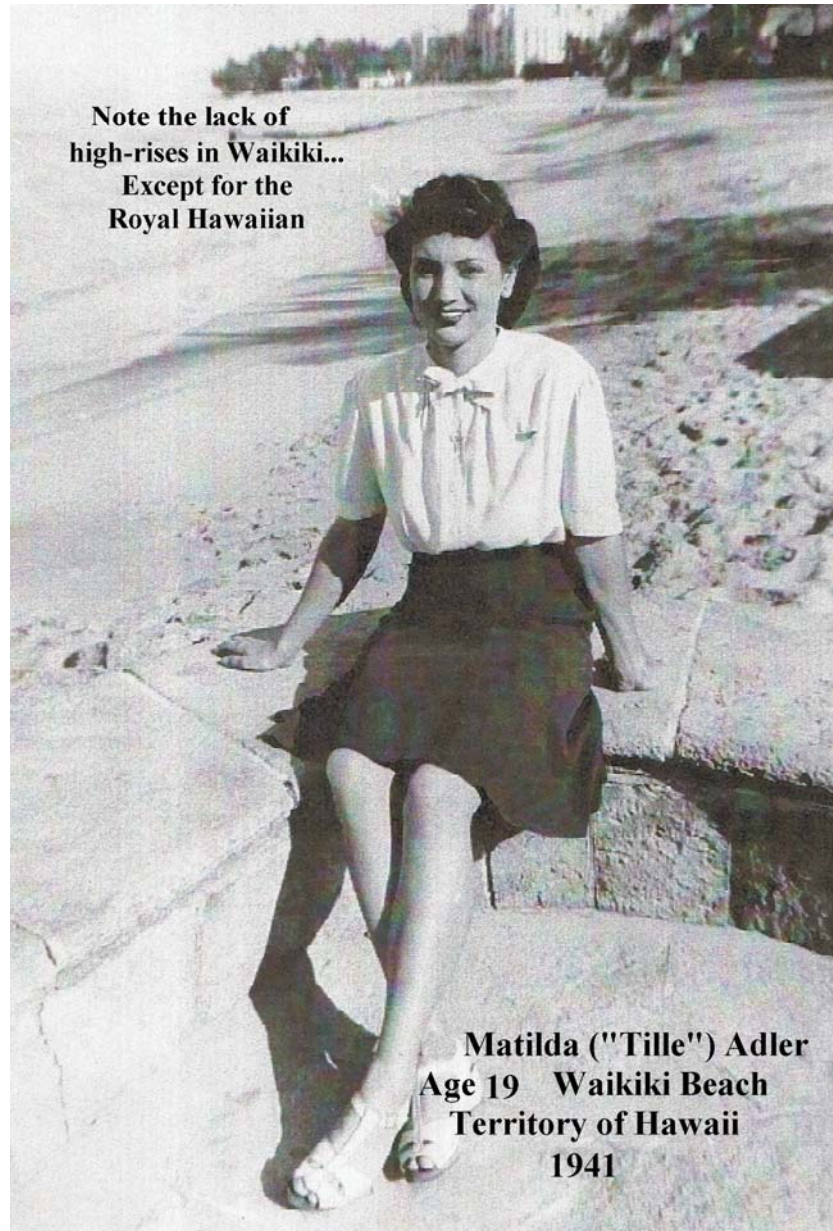


**These photos were enclosed in this letter.**

- Jan. 22, 1941 “ will be at Bellows Field on the other side of the island for ... maneuvers. I went swimming at “Sacred Falls” on the northern part of the island and then we visited the “Mormon Temple”...”
- Feb. 10, 1941 “ came through as a “Sharpshooter” with the 45 automatic ... fired some Ariel gunnery. Used the Browny, 30 cal. Mech. gun from our plane to a target being towed by another B-18.”
- Mar. 8, 1941 “ ... I’m flying about every day now as Ariel Engineer” ... I have only about five months at the most to do on this rock ... Lot’s of things could happen if I stayed here six more months. . In a joking way: “There’s no diamonds in Diamond Head, There’s no cocoa in Cocoa head, There’s no rabbits on Rabbit Island and there’s damn few Hawaiians in Hawaii.” Ha Ha! I got tossed out of an outrigger canoe the other day and my back has been a little sore since. ...”
- April 10, 1941 “... I’ve got a students pilot’s license now and been making some pretty good take offs and landings ... I was put in charge of a squad of 14 men today...”
- April 22, 1941 “ I’ve at last come to the decision that I will leave for the good old U.S.A. sometime this next Aug. ... A friend in the orderly room says that I’d be wise to get off the island while the getting still good. You know, in case of war we would probably be forced to stay here or go the Phil. Islands ... God only knows what the future holds for us but let us hope and pray for the best.”
- May 10, 1941 **Mother’s Day**  
“ I was promoted to “Sergeant” last week and rated as a first class mechanic.”
- June 25, 1941 “ when I saw “Dear Paul” rather than the usual “Dear Paulie” I said Oh Oh, here it comes...(he hadn’t written home for almost two months and worried his folks). I made **Sergeant** and first class A.M. ... The major called me in and gave me a big speech of my past experiences and capabilities and then told me he wanted me to relieve a Tech. Sgt. In teaching school. So now I have my own class, aircraft hydraulics, and an assistant instructor.  
Had to finally decide to buy a car to keep from going nuts. Corp. Sterling O. Thompson ... is half partner with me. We bought a 1937 Packard Coupe, with radio & good condition. . Order reads that men here in Hawaii will have to stay here until their full three-year term is up. ... More and more men are being sent back Sec. 8 or what is known as mentally unfit for military service. Of course, some of these men are doing a good job of acting ... I can not be expected home for at least 10 months from this date. ... I would give these three stripes and two hundred dollars to boot, just to come home when my time is up.  
Well an A-12 cracked up a couple of days ago and the pilot and navigator was both killed. I had flown with the pilot in B-18 once or twice before. He was a young Lt. only 21 years old ... they were flying low in Kalihi Valley and hit a down wind...”



Sometime in 1941 dad met mom. Mom was working in a “Soda Fountain” called **Michell’s** in downtown Honolulu. They served hamburgers, chips and pickles for 35 cents. One-day dad came in and ordered a float from her.



Sept. 1, 1941

**Letter to his twin brother Karl Adler:**

“Well I have a little “Portegee” down here and between her and the car and the high cost of existing, I just about make ends meet.”

Dec. 6, 1941

**Dad is discharged from the hospital. He had a server heel infection.**



Dec. 7, 1941

## Pearl Harbor Attack as Witnessed by Mom

On that Sunday morning of Dec. 7, 1941 dad was in the U. S. Air Corps as an **Aircraft Engine Mechanic Instructor** at **Hickam Field**, presumably in the hangers of the 42nd Bomb Squadron.

Mom was living with her sister Lucy in Kapahulu on the Westside of Diamond Head (3339 Monsarrat Ave.) Ford Island was visible over the few low hotels in Waikiki at the time. They heard bombs exploding, which wasn't unusual since the military used the area around Diamond Head often for "practice."

It was the roar of low flying aircraft that brought them out for a look. At first they thought that the two aircraft they saw were ours, until they saw the **Raising Sun Insignias** on them. In the distance they could see clouds of smoke raising all over Pearl Harbor and the many ships docked there. The aircraft dropped a few bombs in Kapahulu and fired randomly on the surrounding community.

The assumption is that they were part of the second or third attack group and having no targets, or none that were visible at Pearl, they proceeded to fly over the rural area and use their ammunitions, which would have been a waste to return to their carrier with.

Eight miles from Pearl Harbor, three people were killed when the car they were in was attacked, with no military installation or facilities nearby.



The two aircraft were heading towards **St. Louis Heights**. They undoubtedly noticed **St. Louis High School**, a large campus of beautiful Spanish style buildings on St. Louis Heights and thought it would make a good target and proceeded to fire upon the school.

Mom didn't hear from dad for the next three days. She said that all the windows had to be blacked out and remained that way till the end of the war. No one could a drive a car after 6:00PM.

After war broke out due to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army leased St. Louis High School and used it as a medical facility for military family members. The hospital at Pearl Harbor was used for war casualties and Tripler Army Hospital was not built yet.

I was born in the pediatrics ward on the second floor of "**St. Louis Hospital**" as it was called during the war. I also attended St. Louis High School from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The Brothers and Priests at the school would tell me how they went to the roof of the building to watch the main attack at Pearl Harbor only to have two aircraft fire on them. The bullet holes are still visible on the roof of the buildings. **Brother Henry**, my 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, said he could see one of the pilots smiling at him as they flew by.

As it turned out my 8th grade homeroom was the very room I was born in.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, with the exception of missing their primary goal of sinking U.S. carriers, was a complete success. However, they did indeed "... awaken a sleeping giant."

**Paul F. Adler  
In Mechanic's  
Coveralls  
1940**



This aircraft, B-18 No. 60  
Was used in the 1940 Squadron  
Xmas Group Photo.  
(Appendix 7)



The threat of sabotage was far greater than the threat of attack at Pearl Harbor late in 1941. To minimize this risk the Army Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Walter C. Short had ordered his airplanes to be neatly parked in highly visible rows, away from the hangars. At 7:51 a.m. Japanese aircraft descended on Wheeler Field and, four minutes later, other enemy aircraft simultaneously launched the assault on Pearl Harbor and nearby Hickam Field.

Only a few American pilots like Lieutenant Philip Rasmussen who flew into combat in his pajamas, or Lieutenant George Welch who shot down four enemy airplanes that day, managed to get their fighters off the ground. The bulk of the United States Army Air Force was destroyed on the ground. By the time the second wave of Fuchida's attack force arrived over Oahu, perhaps as many as 20 American airplanes had risen to the defense. It was a feeble attempt to preserve what remained. When the sun set over the Hawaiian Islands on December 7, 1941, of nearly 230 Army aircraft assigned to duty in the Pacific, 64 were destroyed and 82 were damaged. More than 500 airmen were either killed or wounded.



**The 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron Before and After the Pearl Harbor Attack**





**Attack on Wheeler Field, Dec. 7, 1941**

Dec. 12, 1941

**Dad sent a Post Card to his folks, a few days after Pearl Harbor:**

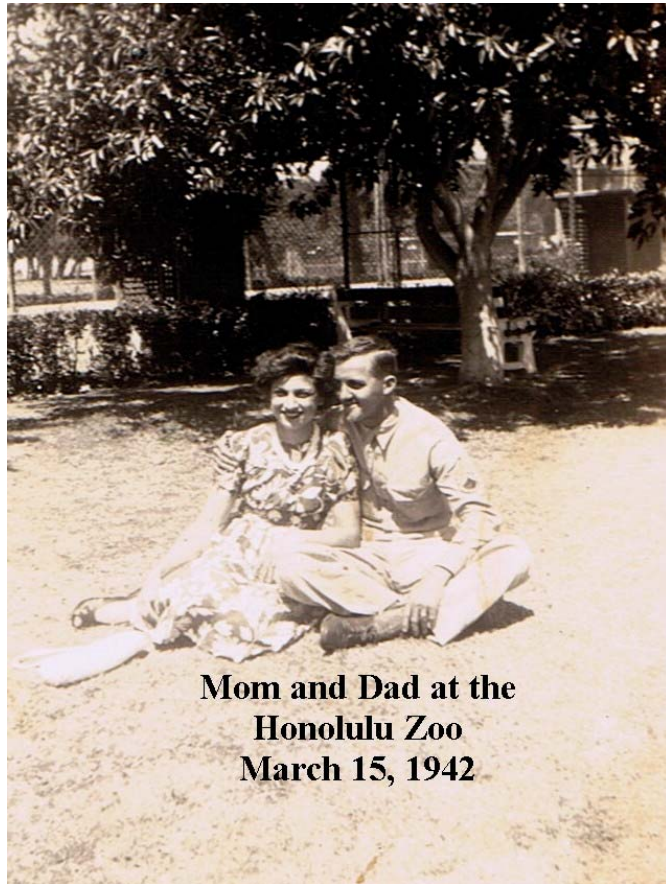
... “ I am OK We’ll finish this war soon and come home. Merry Xmas to all. Love Paul”

- 1942 -

Jan. 4, 1942

“ I am glad you thought I was still in the hospital, since as you say, it would probably have been safer (there). However, this will be all I’ll say about the war situation: as it actually was, I was discharged from the hospital on Sat., Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and as you know the fire-works started the next morning. Believe me, I’ll never forget what I saw Sunday and I am never glad and consider myself lucky that I came out okay and back to work again. ... If I get my ticket to the Happy Hunting Ground, I can sincerely say that I’ll have a clear conscience in believing that I’ve done the best I could and although I have made a few foolish mistakes I can say that I am sorry for them.

**Tillie**, that’s my little gal of the islands, has been swell to me. I left all my personal belongings and clothes, etc. at her house and what do you think she did? She washed and ironed all my things. Swell of her wasn’t it? Claims she loves me. Please don’t be too surprised if I should bring back a “war bride.”



**Mom and Dad at the  
Honolulu Zoo  
March 15, 1942**

Mar. 23, 1942

“Tillie and I have been **engaged** to be married for almost two months now. ... Tillie is going back to her nurse training in a week ... I’ve been put on as **Combat Engineer Flying status**. ... flying engineer not only gives me more pay but also gives me a better chance to square things with the Japs. ... please believe me, I love you all very dearly.”

May 9, 1942

**Mom and Dad were married on May 12, 1942 at 12:15 PM. Mom was 20 years old.**



**3339 Monsarrat Ave. in Kapahulu  
This was the porch where mom and her  
sister watched the attack on Pearl Harbor.**



**Wedding Picture**



May 31, 1942

“ ... we’re very happily married... **Judge F. M. Brooks of Honolulu** was the Justice of the Peace who did the honors. Tilly is a very wonderful wife and if God will only allow us to survive this damn war, I am certain we will have a very happy, successful and lovely-married life ahead of us. For the last week and most likely for another week I’ll be in Tripler Hospital again. It’s my heel infection again. ”

My pilot, **Capt. Hall** said he’d get me back on his crew when I get out. Time may come, very probable to, when you won’t hear from me until after this is all over. If you have anything concerning Til and I send to 3339 Monsarrat Ave. Hon, T.H. ... Our home here is a single white house, furnished. We pay \$45.00 per month rent...my little darling has fixed it up so darn lovely and I can’t even get in once a week. Til is a wonderful cook .. she has come up to the hospital every day and we have a nice time down in the garden. ... I must shave and shower now, for Til will probably be up at 2 PM to visit me. God, but it means so much to see her.”

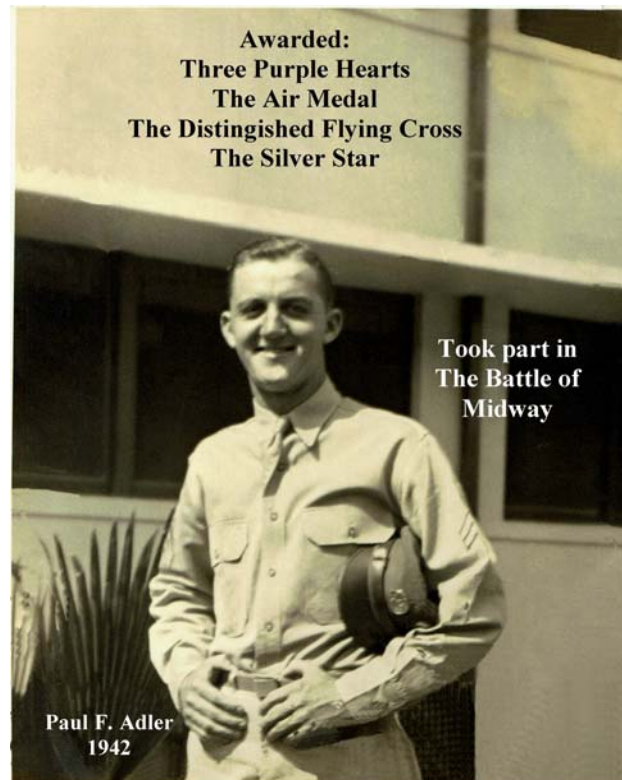
“... I am fine, my wife is fine and she’s just as wonderful and lovely as anybody could wish for. Til will send our wedding picture when they are ready.”

June 4, 1942

### **The Battle of Midway:**

As indicated in a number of newspaper articles, the Air Force’s “Brief,” and by dad himself (see the Oct. 13, 1942 letter) he was awarded the **Silver Star** for his part in the Battle of Midway. (The Boston Daily Globe article incorrectly called it the Silver “Cross.”)

Mom, however, was never able to receive the General Order for this award or the medal itself. Writing to her Congressman, Senators and the War Department, she tried for many years to obtain dad’s Silver Star ...all in vain.





July 14, 1942

**A few days before dad left Hawaii for New Caledonia**

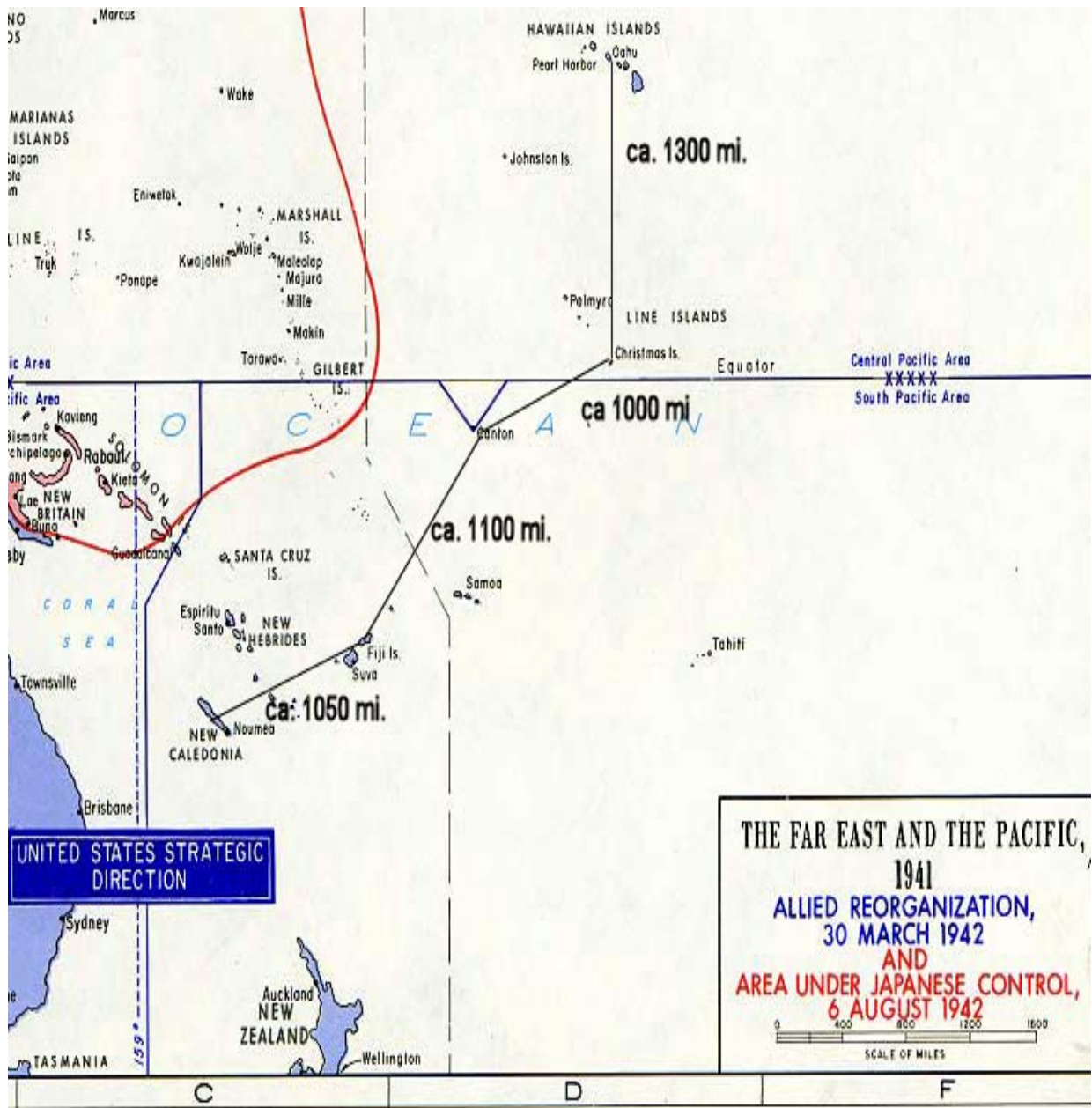
“... I might add the sad news that I am going away for a while. I don't know where or when but in the very near future. As for Til's past – you can rest assure that she is the best. Yes, her mother and father are living down on the island of Hawaii where she was born. I have the best, sweetest, kindest, most lovely and thoughtful and most perfect little wife any fellow could ever hope to have.

... you may again be made grandma and granpa in about eight months from now. .. I am very happy as I always wanted a little child ... she is very understanding about my having to leave ... I hope to be back by the time our baby is born ... Dear mother and dad please write Til often and please do all you can for her as you must realize how hard it will be for her. Please express your love for me through Til. Please remember me to all and take care of yourself.”

July 19, 1942

Dad and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron leave Hawaii for the **South Pacific**.

**- Route to New Caledonia, The South Pacific -**



The transfer from Hawaii to the South Pacific was a challenge in its own right. As shown on this map, the flights were long, mostly over open water, with crews who did not have extensive experience as either pilots or navigators. The four flights were long. Hawaii to Christmas Island was nine hours; Christmas Island to Canton was six and one-half hours; Canton to Fiji was seven hours thirty-five minutes, and Fiji to New Caledonia was six and one-half hours. (Courtesy of Hal Hall)

From time to time, Dad and many of the airmen were sent to New Zealand for R and R.

July 23, 1942 The 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron arrives at **Plaines des Gaiacs**, New Caledonia



Plaines des Gaiacs (better known as P.D.G.) was a very large Army Air Force base on New Caledonia, on Nepoui Bay on the west shore 130 miles from Noumea. The maintenance crews for the 42nd bomber Squadron were stationed there. Planes flew one to three week bombing missions, then returned to Plains des Gaiacs for maintenance and servicing. (Courtesy of Hal hall)



**B-17 41-2426, 11<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group at Plains des Gaiacs**

From their base on New Caledonia (Plaines des Gaiacs) to Henderson Field on Guadalcanal was about 1,000 miles.



Aug. 8, 1942 Note: US forces take Henderson Field.

Aug. 9, 1942 The 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron arrives at **Henderson Field, Guadalcanal.**



**HENDERSON FIELD, GUADALCANAL**

Living conditions were very poor at Henderson. Dad wrote that he ate mostly beans and men slept in wet tents. The rats ate everything but the planes. Fuel was dropped by the Navy into the sea and floated to shore. It was taken to the aircraft and hand-pumped into the tanks.



Aug. 20, 1942

**From Mom to Paul's mother:**

Dear Mother Adler, .... Received a letter from Paul ... in one of them he wrote saying something for me to write you & the censor tore it off. Says it's rather rainy now where he is. ...” **(Dad was in Guadalcanal)**

Aug. 26, 1942

Action against the enemy earned him **The Air Medal** (Appendix 2)



**Mom and Dad in 1942**

Sept. 9, 1942

“ ... Let me say right here that leaving Til was one of and probably will be one of the hardest ordeals I've ever had to cope with. Til was pretty swell about it and the tears in her eyes and the darting words that were said, were and always will be very dear to me. ... I will do all in my power to be with her when our child takes his bow to the world.”

Oct. 13, 1942

**Excerpts from a letter from Paul's mother to his twin brother, Karl:**

“ Received a letter from Paul last Saturday and he is well so far but says war is hell. ... he is greatly worried over Tillie ... and has received the **Silver Star** for something they did at Midway (June 4-7,1942) he can not say what it was they did but said *if they could do that every day the war would soon end.*” (I haven't been able to determine what action is was referring to here.)

Oct. 30, 1942

“... I haven't heard from you except the letters you write to Til and she sends them on to me. ... I can't write where I am or what I am doing so you just have to read about it in the papers. I am not where Til thinks I am. I rather not have her know exactly where I am ... the poor darling is having a hard enough time as it is. I can read between the lines a little and know just how badly she misses me and how she builds up hope. ... chins up folks, this hell can't last forever. ... I love you, as a son should. I keep Til's pictures and her last letter on me all the time....”

Nov. 12, 1942

Promoted to Technical Sergeant

# Army of the United States



To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities of Staff Sergeant PAUL ADLER, 6147915, I do hereby appoint him Technical Sergeant (Temp) 42nd Bomb Squadron (H), AAF, ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, to rank as such from the Twelfth day of November one thousand nine hundred and Forty-two. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Technical Sergeant by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge and require all Noncommissioned Officers and Soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as Technical Sergeant. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time, as he shall receive from his Superior Officers and Noncommissioned Officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of War.

Given under my hand at Hickam Field, T. H. this Thirtieth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and Forty-two  
By command of Major General HALE:

*L. F. Johnson*  
L. F. JOHNSON, Capt., AC., Actg Asst Adjutant General, Seventh Air Force.

W.D., A.G.O. Form No. 24  
March 25, 1924

\* Insert grade, company, and regiment or arm or service; e. g., "Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry." "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps."  
† Insert grade. 3956 O Honolulu 8-20-42 20M. P23

- 1943 -

January 1943      Dad gets ...      - **A Lucky Break** -

In the early part of Jan. 1943, Captain Hall's B-17 No. 41-9151 was flown back to Hawaii for repairs, although not by Capt. Hall and his regular crew. From dad's Jan. 15, 1943 letter to his mom, it seems that apparently Captain Hall used his influence with the squadron commander to let dad "hitch a ride" on the aircraft back to Hawaii to be with mom.

Mom was two weeks from giving birth to me, dad thought it was four weeks. Nevertheless, this lucky break enabled dad to be with her for a few days (or for as long as it took to repair the ship). Dad was able to let mom in on where he was and what he was doing, although given her condition, he probably neglected to mention the danger he was in or the deplorable conditions that he and the others had to endure at Henderson Field.

He also wanted his family back "East" to know where he was and being aware of the censors, he sent his mom sort of a "code." The following is part of his last letter to his parents.

Jan. 15, 1943      **Last Letter to his mom (written in Hawaii):**

"...by the grace of God & Capt. Hall and my squadron commander's help I got back here (Hawaii) for my plane (41-9151) to be repaired. ... I only wish I could be here when our baby is born. Due in about four weeks now. I expect to be called back (to Henderson Field) any day now. ... folks, about this mail set up I tell you this that out of 75 to 100 letters that Til wrote me from Aug. to Nov. (1942) I actually received only ten of them ... Mom, to make it more clear about my whereabouts, remember that little song you used to sing in the kitchen. It was about an old tailor named "Levi, Levi ..." Well his first name is the answer. Lovingly Your son, Paulie."

(The tailor's name was ...Solomom Levi)

Jan. 18, 1943      Dad returns to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal to rejoin Capt. Hall's crew.

Jan. 24, 1943      **His mother writes her last letter, which was "Returned to Sender" on April 2, 1943:**

Dad never read this letter, however, his mother wrote:

"My dear Paul, ... God bless you and lots of love to you and Tillie. Keep up your chin Paulie."

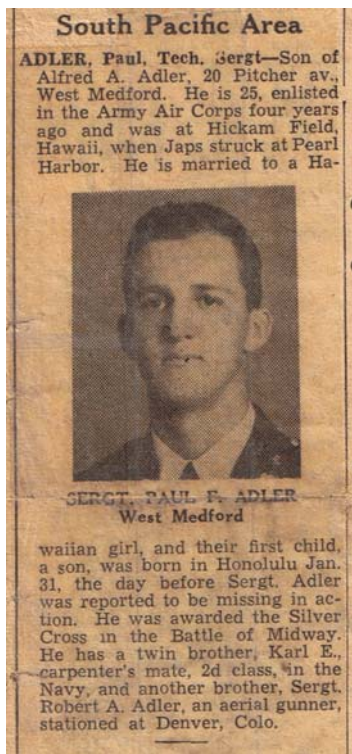
Jan. 31, 1943      While I was being born in Hawaii, in the Solomon Islands, where it was Feb. 1, 1943, dad and his fellow crewmates were flying their **Last Mission**. (See Appendix 9 for Details)

April 2, 1943 The letter that dad's mother wrote on Jan. 24, 1943 is stamped "Return To Sender" after two months.

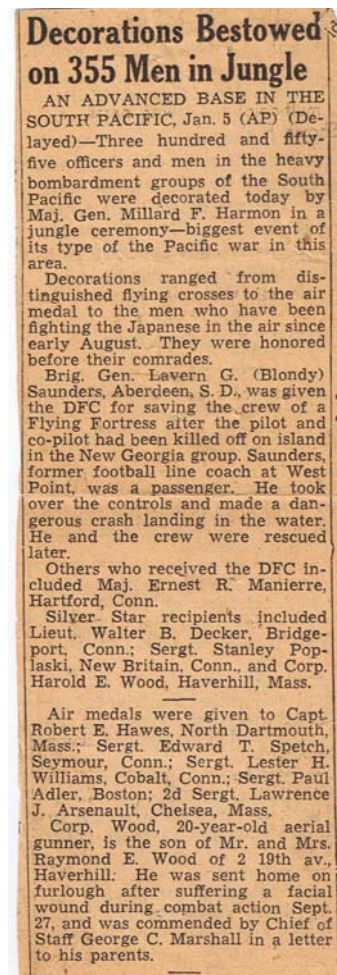


April 21, 1943 Awarded The Distinguished Flying Cross (Appendix 5)

Aug. 6, 1943 Articles appearing in the Boston Daily Globe:




Across the International Date Line to the west, Jan. 31, 1943 in Hawaii was Feb. 1, 1943.





Dec. 7, 1943 Baby Receives Award for Father, The Brief Article (**Appendix 6**)

Feb. 9, 1944 **Lieut. Robert W. Breed, USNR : Letter to Paul's Father.**  
One year after the last mission mom is still hoping for dad's return.  
"... The youngster is really a corker."

|   |  |                    |                         |
|---|--|--------------------|-------------------------|
| No.   |  | From               | Lieut. R.W. Breed, USNR |
|  | To   | Navy #59 (DIO)     |                         |
|   |  | (Sender's address) |                         |
|   |  | FPO, San Francisco |                         |
|   | Mr. A. A. ADLER<br>% Arthur Johnson Company<br>195 Devonshire Street<br>BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS | 9 February, 1944   |                         |
|   |  | (Date)             |                         |

4

Dear Mr. Adler:

I am sorry not to have written much sooner, as I promised. As a matter of fact, it was only a day or so ago that I managed to call on Paul's wife here in Honolulu at her residence.

You are naturally most interested in any further information about Paul, the circumstances of his loss, and subsequent news which the War Department may have supplied. Mrs. Adler Jr. is still hoping that the original report of "missing in action" may yet be changed to a "rescued - has been living with natives", or something similar to this - there have been a number of such instances previously, particularly where air corps personnel are involved. She has no concrete basis for this hope except that it has happened to a number of others. Mrs. Adler assured me that she had written you everything she has been able to learn about the particular circumstances, so I did not feel that I should inquire further or ask her to repeat them to me.

I do not believe that any further information could be obtained in Honolulu. It is possible, however, that the Judge Advocate General's Office, War Department, Washington, D.C., may by this time have some further news, though I feel sure the latter would pass it on to you as soon as they received any.

You will be glad to know that Mrs. Adler is comfortably situated in a nice little home which she shares with another girl and the baby. The youngster is really a corker. Big brown eyes, light hair, and a real bouncing boy if ever I saw one. I should certainly say he looked like the Adler side of the family, judging from the pictures I saw in the house. They really seem to be getting along very nicely.

I am sorry I can't give you anything more definite, but certainly hope that good news may be forthcoming.

Very sincerely,  
*Robert W. Breed*  
Robert W. Breed

V - MAIL

Sept. 27, 1944 Frank N. Stern's father writes to Paul's father. (**Appendix 10**)

Oct. 2, 1944 Capt. Hall's father writes to Paul's father. (**Appendix 11**)

Jan. 11, 1946 All Missing In Action personnel are **Officially Declare Dead.**

**- Final Declaration by The War Department -**

WAR DEPARTMENT  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to.

AGPC-S201 Adler, Paul  
(11 Jan 46) 6,147,915

11 January 1946

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred A. Adler  
16 Forest Street  
Cambridge 40, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Adler:

Since your son, Technical Sergeant Paul Adler, 6,147,915, Air Corps, was reported missing in action 1 February 1943, the War Department has entertained the hope that he survived and that information would be revealed dispelling the uncertainty surrounding his absence. However, as in many cases, the conditions of warfare deny us such information.

Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, provides for a review and determination of the status of each person who has been missing in action for twelve months. Accordingly, your son's case was reviewed and he was continued in the status of missing in action as of 2 February 1944. The law further provided that a subsequent review shall be made whenever warranted, upon such subsequent review the making of a finding of death is authorized.

All available records and reports concerning the absence of your son have been carefully investigated and are deemed to warrant a subsequent review of his case. Information in the hands of the War Department indicated that your son was a crew member of a B-17 (Fortress) aircraft which departed an advanced base in the Solomon Islands on 1 February 1943 on a mission to bomb an enemy airfield on Munda in the southwestern part of that group of Islands. The plane was proceeding over enemy held territory on this mission and failed to return to its base. No trace of your son has been found since that time.

Since no information has been received which would support a presumption of his continued survival the War Department must now terminate your son's absence by a presumptive finding of death. Accordingly, an official finding of death has been recorded. The finding does not establish an actual or probable date of death; however, as required by law, it includes a presumptive date of death for the purpose of termination of pay and allowances settlement of accounts and payment of death gratuities. In the case of your son this date has been set as 11 January 1946.

I regret the necessity for this message but trust that the ending of a long period of uncertainty may give at least some small measure of consolation. An appraisal of the sacrifice made by your son in the service of his country compels in us feelings of humility and respect. May Providence grant a measure of relief from the anguish and anxiety you have experienced during these many months.

SINCERELY YOURS,

Signed  
EDWARD P. WITSELL  
Major General

Acting The Adjutant General of the Army.

1 Incl.



April 9, 1946 Letter from **General Douglas MacArthur**

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, PACIFIC

A.P.O. 500,  
April 9, 1946.

Mr. Alfred A. Adler,  
16 Forest Street,  
Cambridge 40, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Adler:

My deepest sympathy goes to you in the  
death of your son, Technical Sergeant Paul Adler.

Although I well know that words are  
inadequate at this time, the knowledge that he made  
the supreme sacrifice for his country and for humanity  
will help to bring some consolation in your hour of  
bereavement.

Very faithfully,

*Douglas MacArthur*

Dec. 15, 1947 Mr. H. T. Hall 's letter to the Adlers

Crawford, Texas.  
12 / 15 / 1947.

Mr. & Mrs. A. A. Adler,  
16 Forest St.  
Cambridge 40,

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Adler;

My wife was sending out Christmas cards and when she called out your name I ask if I might write a few lines and wish you a very very pleasant Xmas and happy New year.

I have thought for some time I would write you for I do so much want to know how little Paul Earl is getting along.

Time has drug along slow for us for the past five years all hopes have vanished and there is nothing left but be reconciled the best we can, I am sure you received about the same news we did on Jan. 11th 46, We were told that they were declared gone on that day and that was all, if you learned any more please write it to me.

We are encloseing two views of a little Tablet we had erected near Earl's Mother's grave in his memory and in honor of the eight brave boys who fell with him.

The names are very plain on monment but you may have to use magnifying glass to bring them out good.

Again wishing you happyness, health, and success for many years to come ,

We remain Sincerely,  
H.T.Hall & family.

*H.T. Hall*



# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### A Little About Mom (“Til”)

**Matilda Marks Nobriga** was born on Sept. 25, 1922 in Kona, on the Big Island of Hawaii. She was known as “Tillie,” or as dad called her “Til.”

Her father was **Manual Nobriga** who immigrated to the islands from **Madeira Islands, Portugal**. He spoke mostly Portuguese, however, he did relate to me how he traveled from the Azores, around the Cape to Chile, and then to Hawaii in a sailing ship. He said many of the fellows he started out with died at sea and were simply dropped over-board.

Mom’s mother, **Mary Sampaio Gouveia Nobriga**, also of Portuguese decent, was born in Kona. She spoke Portuguese and English fluently. Her grand mother, **Rita Silva Sampaio** had blue eyes and lived to be 105 years old.

Mom left Kona for the island of Oahu as a young girl. She had six siblings: two brothers and four sisters and I presume that the house had gotten too small for so many people by the time she turned 17 or 18 years old. On Oahu, mom lived with one of her sisters and got a job at “**Michell’s Soda Fountain**” in downtown Honolulu, where she met dad.

Sometime after the war mom got a job with the **U. S. Post Office** and retired after 37 years of service. At retirement she was the Supervisor for the **Waikiki Post Office**.



**Photo of Mom (Mrs. Matilda M. Adler)**

At this writing (August 2010), mom is living in a Senior Care Home in Waipahu, Hawaii. Sadly, she has had Alzheimer’s disease for the past 8 years.

## Appendix 2

### Awarded The Air Metal on Jan. 7, 1942

HEADQUARTERS USAFISPA  
APO 502

January 7, 1943

GENERAL ORDERS)  
:  
NO.....9)

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#### I AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL.

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order 9158 (Bul. No. 25, W.D., 1942), as amended by Executive Order No. 9242-a (Bul. 49, WD., 1942), the Air Medal is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following named enlisted men:

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

PAUL ADLER (6147915), Staff Sergeant, United States Army Air Corps, for meritorious achievement in air operations against the enemy on August 26, 1942, in the Solomon Island area. Sergeant Adler, as crew member of a heavy bombardment airplane proceeding on a search mission, participated in an attack upon a Japanese four-engined flying boat which was sighted and engaged at a point about 50 miles Northwest of Gizo Island. The enemy craft turned away but was overtaken and again engaged for approximately 45 minutes, finally being shot down by Sergeant Adler and other members of the crew. Immediately following this action, their airplane was attacked by a enemy fighter which made one pass, secured two hits on the left wing and then pursued, out of gun range, for approximately 50 miles before turning away. Home address: Boston, Massachusetts.

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

By command of Major General HARMON:

H. F. TWINING,  
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,  
Chief of Staff.



OFFICIAL:

J. H. MARSHALL  
Major AGD,  
Asst. Adj. Gen.

A TRUE COPY:

*Andrew Kowalski*  
ANDREW KOWALSKI,  
Captain, Air Corps.

## Appendix 3

### The Crew of B-17E 41-9151 (Feb. 1, 1943)

**Pilot: Major Earl O. Hall ID: 0-325099**

Entered the Service from: **Texas**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

**Co-Pilot: First Lieutenant Joaquin Castro ID: 0-428914**

Entered the Service from: **Texas**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

**Engineer: TSgt. Paul F. Adler ID: 06147915**

Entered the Service from: **Massachusetts**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart** (Mom and other documents indicated that he was also awarded the **Silver Star** (Appendix 5), however the War Department has no record of it.)

**Navigator: Second Lieutenant Frank N. Stern ID: 0-438256**

Entered the Service from: **Illinois**

Awards: **Air Medal, Purple Heart**

**Bombardier: Staff Sergeant James Y. Bales ID: 15058894**

Entered the Service from: **Indiana**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

**Radio Man / Waist Gunner: Staff Sergeant James C. Stephens ID: 06953552**

Entered the Service from: **Colorado**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

**Waist Gunner: Sergeant Jesse N. Olmstead ID: 11033041**

Entered the Service from: **Connecticut**

Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

**Ball-Turret Gunner: Staff Sergeant Francis S. Banasiak ID: 11020224**

Entered the Service from: **Massachusetts**

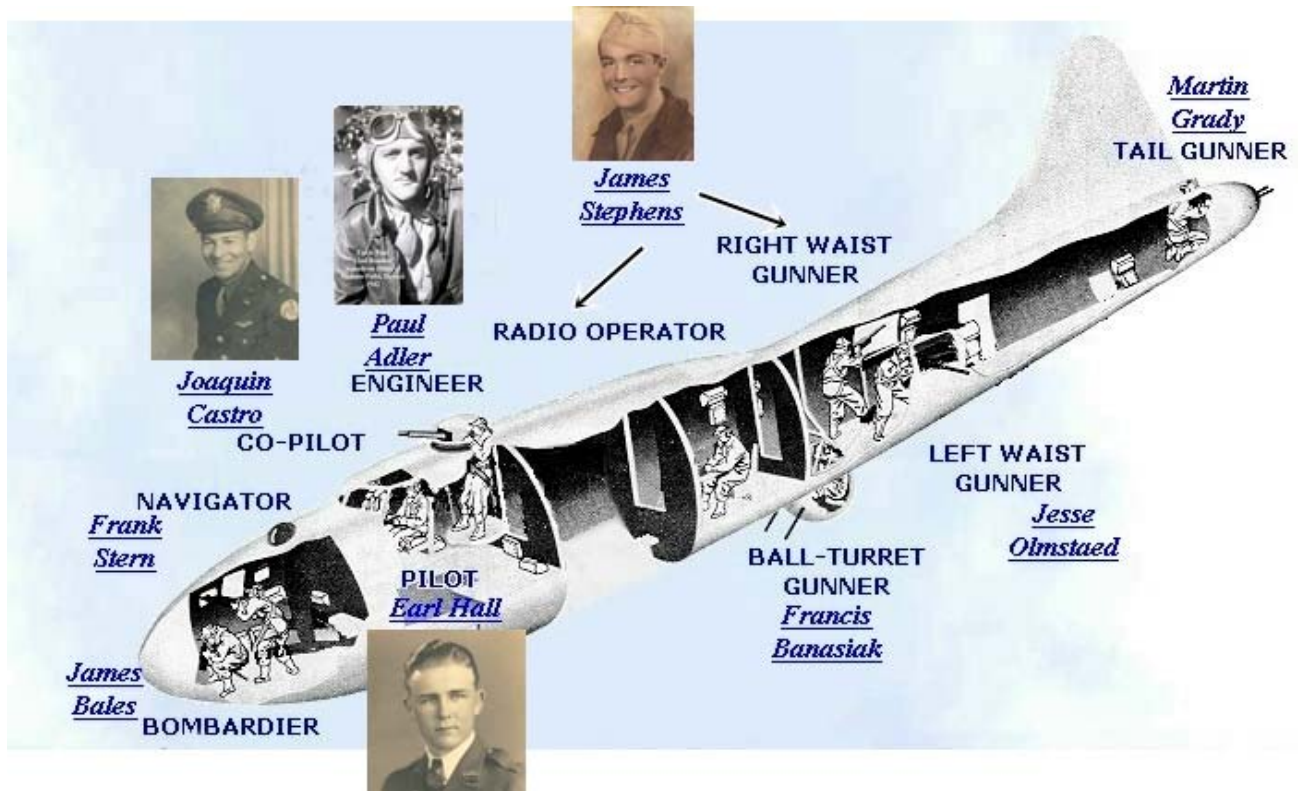
Awards: **Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**

**Tail Gunner: Sergeant Martin T. Grady ID: 06980875**

Entered the Service from: **New York**

Awards: **Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart**





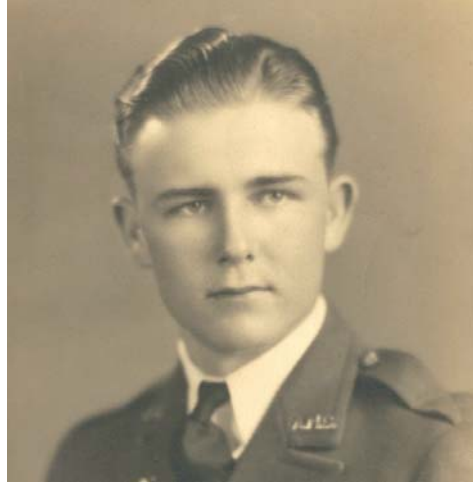
**Captain Hall's Crew, Feb. 1, 1943**



## **A Little about the Crew (Courtesy of Hal Hall)**

B-17 Flying Fortress crews in the South Pacific spent most of their time together. They flew missions, stayed close together during off-hours so they could react quickly during alerts, and went to secure areas for rest and relaxation together. ... This section is a start toward discovering who the rest of the crew was, and a bit about them.

### **Pilot: Major Earl O. Hall ID: 0-325099**



### **Co-Pilot: First Lieutenant Joaquin Castro ID: 0-428914**

Joaquin Castro entered the service, leaving his job at the law firm of Strickland, Ewers and Wilkins in Mission Texas. He was a student in the Mission schools, completing Mission High School, where he was active in football, baseball, basketball and track. He completed work at Edinburgh Junior College before beginning his career. Castro trained at Luke Field, Arizona, where he was commissioned in November, 1941. Lt. Castro was stationed at Hickam Field in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. Lt. Castro was gathering material for his first post-war goal, a book to be titled "Living On and Under the Wing."



**Navigator: Second Lieutenant Frank N. Stern ID: 0-438256**

The navigator directs the flight from departure to destination and return. He must know the exact position of the airplane at all times with the aid of pilotage, dead reckoning, radio navigation, or celestial navigation. In order to fulfill his duties as navigator, he also has to be familiar with instrument calibration, pre-flight planning, and flight debriefing. The navigator operates and services one of the machine guns located near his station.

**Bombardier: Staff Sergeant James Y. Bales ID: 15058894**

The engineer is supposed to know more about the airplane than any other member of the crew. He works closely together with the pilot and co-pilot, checking engine operation, fuel consumption, and the operation of all equipment. He also works with the bombardier and radio operator helping them in their tasks. The engineer also operates the top turret, and thus, acts as one of the gunners of B-17.

**Engineer: TSgt. Paul F. Adler ID: 06147915**

Waist gunners are characterized as “flexible gunners” as opposed to “turret gunners.” They have to be familiar with the coverage area of all gun positions. They have to be experts in aircraft identification, and must also know how to maintain and operate the guns in various conditions.



**Ball-Turret Gunner: Staff Sergeant Francis S. Banasiak ID: 11020224**

The bombardier is responsible for accurate and effective bombing. He is in absolute command of the plane during the bombing run. He actually may control the plane through the bomb sight while making his way to the correct release point. As preparatory tasks, the bombardier studies the current target and corresponding weather conditions before take-off, and arms the bombs when the plane is over enemy territory. The bombardier also operates the machine guns located on the nose of the B-17.

## Radio Man / Waist Gunner: Staff Sergeant James C. Stephens ID: 06953552

The radio operator is responsible for all the radio equipment of B-17. His duties include position reports, assisting the navigator, keeping the liaison and command sets properly tuned and in good operating order, and last but not least, maintaining a log. Apart from his radio operating, he acts as a gunner, and usually also as a flight photographer.



*Jim Stephens*

*(Used by permission of the Stephens family.)*

## Tail Gunner: Sergeant Martin T. Grady ID: 06980875

The gunners belong to one of two distinct categories: turret gunners and flexible gunners. They have to be familiar with the coverage area of all gun positions. They have to be experts in aircraft identification, and must also know how to maintain and operate the guns in various conditions. The designated gunner posts are right and left waist gunners, ball turret gunner and tail gunner. Other gunner posts include nose turret gunner, cheek guns, top turret gunner, and radio room gunner.

## Waist Gunner: Sergeant Jesse N. Olmstead ID: 11033041

This clipping from the Portsmouth, N. H. Herald is the only information found on Sgt. "J. W. Olmstead". The place and timing are correct for this to be Sgt. Jesse N. Olmstead, but the legend lists "J. W."





This photograph is thought to be a member of the crew. The headset seems to indicate a radio operator. It may be Frank Banasiak or possibly Jesse Olmstead.



The radio operator is responsible for all the radio equipment of B-17. His duties include position reports, assisting the navigator, keeping the liaison and command sets properly tuned and in good operating order, and last but not least, maintaining a log. Apart from his radio operating, he acts as a gunner, and usually also as a flight photographer.

**Unknown**



**Apparently no photo of B-17 No. 41-9151 exists. This photo of 41-9141 and 41-9131 was taken over Seattle where the B-17s were produced. Could it have been taken from 41-9151 ?**

## Appendix 4

### List of Crews' Next of Kin

#### Sept. 28, 1944: List of Crew Member's Next of Kin:

On Sept. 28, 1944 First Lieutenant C. A. Oakley of the Personal Affairs Division wrote a letter to Paul's father regarding his disappearance and the last mission. I assume that he also sent a similar letter to each of Capt. Hall's crew members' families. He included a list of each of the crew and their last known next of kin. Perhaps it was standard procedure or he knew that each relative might find comfort in being in contact with other parents/relatives.

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

ATTENTION: AFPPA - 8

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON



AAF 201 - (R-47) Adler, Paul  
6147915

September 28, 1944.

Mr. Alfred A. Adler,  
20 A Pitcher Avenue,  
West Medford, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Adler:

I am writing you with reference to your son, Technical Sergeant Paul Adler, who was reported by The Adjutant General as missing in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands since February 1, 1943.

Further information has been received indicating that Sergeant Adler was a crew member of a B-17 (Flying Fortress) bomber which departed from Guadalcanal on a bombardment mission to Munda on February 1, 1943. Details are not available, the report indicating that your son's bomber was not seen or contacted after it left its base and that the circumstances surrounding its disappearance are unknown. A search was instituted but up to the present time no information has been received concerning the disappearance of your son or his bomber.

For your information, I am inclosing a list of those who were in the plane and the names and addresses of their next of kin.

Please be assured that a continuing search by land, sea, and air is being made to discover the whereabouts of our missing personnel. As our armies advance over enemy occupied territory, special troops are assigned to this task, and all agencies of the government in every country are constantly sending in details which aid us in bringing additional information to you.

Very sincerely,

*C. A. Oakley*  
C. A. OAKLEY,

First Lieutenant, A. C.,  
Notification Branch,  
Personal Affairs Division,

Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Personnel.

1 Incl.

Captain Earl O. Hall

Mr. Holbert T. Hall, (Father) ✓  
Crawford, Texas.

1st Lt. Joaquin Castro

Mr. Crispin Castro, (Father)  
527 West Seventh Street,  
Mission, Texas.

2nd Lt. Frank N. Stern, Jr.

Mr. Frank N. Stern, Sr., (Father)  
Shoreland Hotel,  
5454 South Shore Drive,  
Chicago, Illinois.

S/Sgt. James W. Bales

Mr. Fred W. Bales, (Brother)  
Crawfordsville, Indiana.

T/Sgt. Paul Adler

Mr. Alfred A. Adler, (Father)  
20 A Pitcher Avenue,  
West Medford, Massachusetts.

S/Sgt. Francis S. Banasiak

Mrs. Jean Gaughan, (Sister)  
150 East Dwight Street,  
Holyoke, Massachusetts.

S/Sgt. James C. Stephens, Jr.

Mr. James C. Stephens, Sr., (Father)  
Post Office Box 336,  
Paonia, Colorado.

Sgt. Jesse N. Olmstead

Mrs. Mary E. Olmstead, (Mother)  
R. F. D. #1,  
Newtown Avenue,  
Norwalk, Connecticut.

Sgt. Martin T. Grady

Mr. Patrick E. Grady, (Father)  
533 West 51st Street,  
New York City, New York.



## Appendix 5

### Awarded The Distinguished Flying Cross on April 23, 1943

HEADQUARTERS USAFISPA  
APO #502

21 April 1943

GENERAL ORDERS )  
NO. . . . . 97 )

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\*\*\*\*

#### III AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS (TO PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION):

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 2, 1926, (Bul. No. 8, W.S., 1926), the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following named officers and enlisted men missing in action:

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

PAUL ADLER, (6147915), Technical Sergeant, United States Army Air Corps, for extraordinary achievement in the Solomon Islands while participating in air flights totalling over 361 hours, during which exposure to enemy fire was probable and expected. Next of kin: Mrs. Matilda W. Adler, 3339 Mosarrat Avenue, Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii.

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

By command of Lieutenant General HARMON:

A. J. BARNETT,  
Brigadier General, GSC,  
Chief of Staff.

#### OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM A. LORD, JR.,  
Lt. Col., Inf.,  
Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen.

#### A TRUE COPY:

*Andrew Kowalski*  
ANDREW KOWALSKI,  
Captain, Air Corps.





## Appendix 6

### The Brief: “Baby Receives Medals for Father”



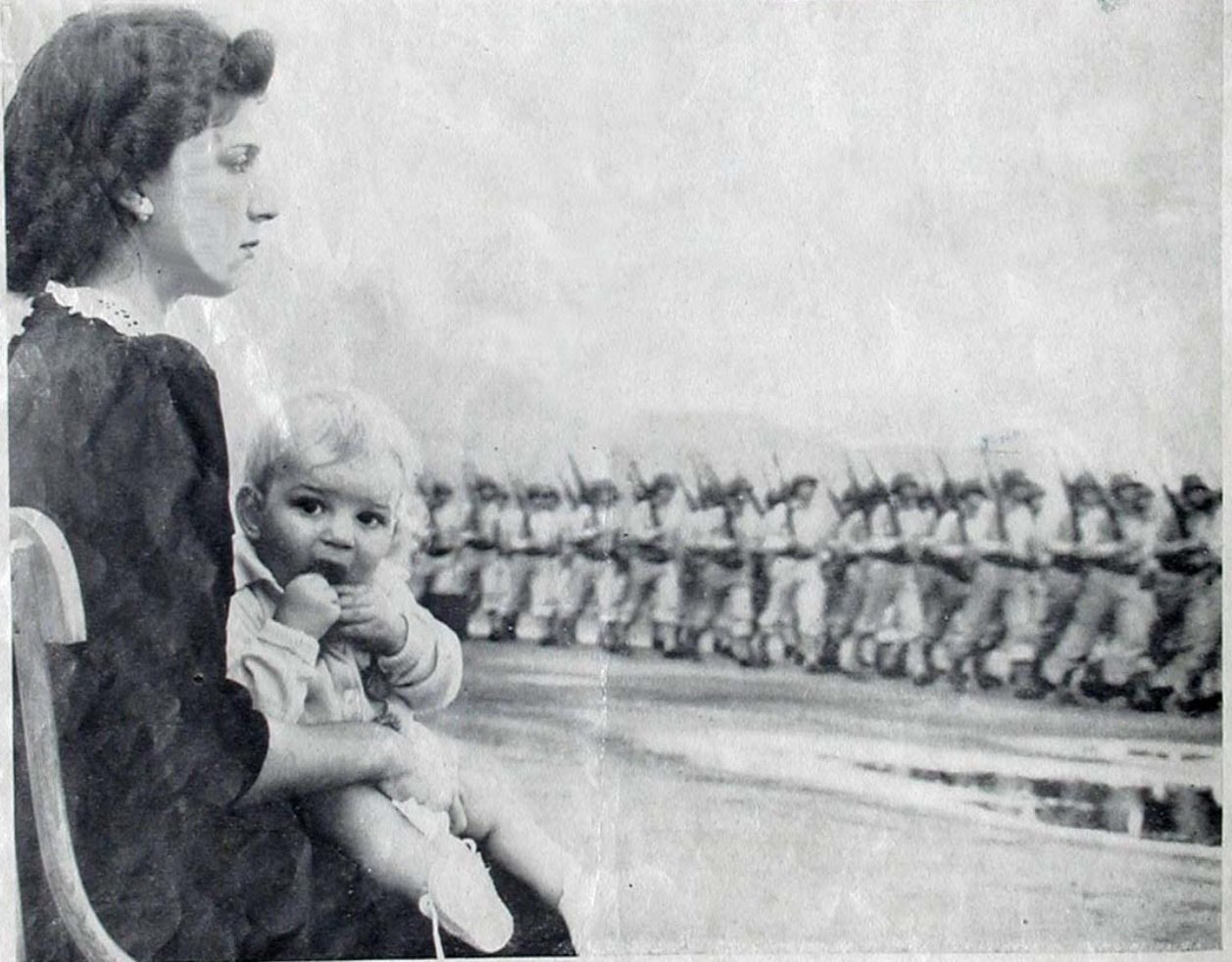
The “Brief” was a WWII news magazine published by the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force and sold for \$.10. An article appeared in this, the Dec. 21, 1943 issue. The actual presentation occurred on **Dec. 7, 1943**. At the time I was 10 months old and apparently was more interested in the cameraman than the troops marching in review.



Pretty, young mom held me as **Brig. Gen. Robert M. Douglass** pinned the **Distinguished Flying Cross** and the **Air Medal** on me for dad on Dec. 7, 1943, the **2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Pearl Harbor**.

# BABY RECEIVES AWARD for FATHER

**MENTAL COURAGE:** Mrs. Adler, nearly on the verge of tears, poses for the cameraman following the ceremony. The posthumous awards include the Air Medal as well as the DFC. (BRIEF photo.)





**W**HILE thousands of troops stationed on an airfield here stood at attention in the biting wind that swept down the runway, Mrs. Matilda Adler and her nine months old baby, wife and son of T.Sgt Paul F. Adler, and four enlisted men were decorated by Brig Gen Robert M. Douglass, Jr., commanding general of the Fighter Command, for extraordinary achievement and meritorious action against the common enemy, and heroic acts performed at APO #951 in April, 1943.

Sgt Adler, who was declared missing in action in the Solomons area last February, had previously been decorated with the Silver Star, in addition to the Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross presented posthumously to his small son by Gen Douglass.

The citation read in part as follows: "While the battle for the Solomons was raging full scale, Sgt Adler, crew member of an American bomber, was recommended for the Air Medal for his part in action that resulted in the shooting down of a Japanese flying boat on a return from a mission over enemy territory.

"The Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded Sgt Adler for extraordinary achievement in flights over the Solomons totalling more than 361 hours during which exposure to enemy fire was probable and expected."

Sgt Adler, age 25 years, was a resident of Lexington, Mass., prior to enlistment, and served in the Hawaiian area before the Pearl Harbor attack.

**"... had previously been decorated with the Silver Star, ..."**

**Mom said she tried for many years to get Dad's Silver Star by writing to her Congressman and the War Department .... all to no avail.**

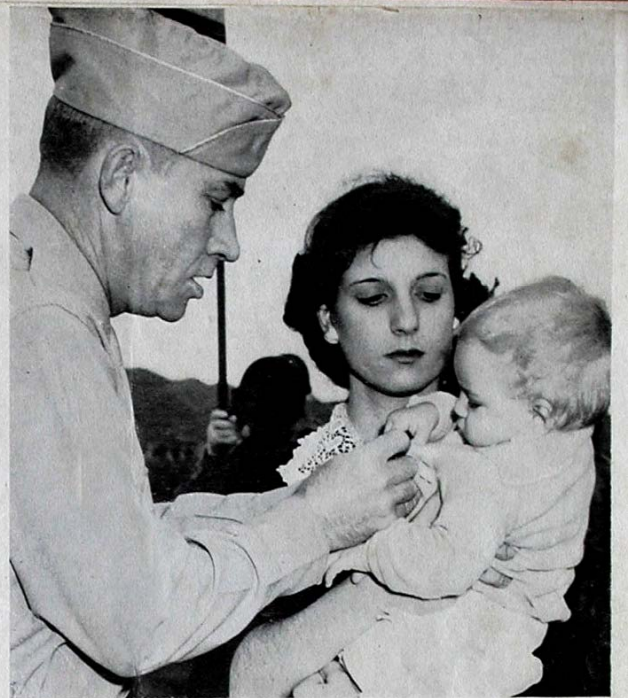
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**FROM GENERAL:** (Above) Brig Gen Robert Douglass, commanding general of the Fighter Command, pins the DFC on the infant son of T.Sgt Paul Adler. Gen Douglass later addressed troops on the current situation. (BRIEF photo.)



**SOLDIERS ALL:** While troops of an airbase here pass in review, Mrs. Paul F. Adler, of Honolulu, wife of T.Sgt Paul Adler, missing in action, and her nine

months old son, receive posthumous awards due the flying sergeant for acts of bravery down under. (BRIEF photo.)

abouts of her flying husband, she professed hope last week at her home, 3339 Monserrat Ave., Honolulu, that, "not until I receive certain notice from the War Department concerning Paul's death will I give up hope."

Other enlisted men who received the Soldier's Medal were S.Sgt Martin Alfred, Nicholasville, Ky., S.Sgt Martin Alfred, Brooklyn, N. Y., S.Sgt Frank Buehle, Williamsport, Pa., S.Sgt James McGinn, Boston, Mass., Pvt. Harold Morgan, Hagerstown, Md., and Marrior Morgan, Abilene, Texas.

Following the presentations Gen Douglass addressed the troops in which he said: "American forces are slowly but surely beating their way towards Japan. The Japanese Empire is like an octopus, with Japan proper, the fat, festering body and her outlying possessions the long and slimy tentacles. These tentacles are being severed one by one, as the result of our victories in the Aleutians, Solomons, Midway, Gilberts and before many months pass, our forces will smash at the heart of the Jap Empire."

The parading troops who passed in review honoring those decorated were commanded by Major Jerome W. Jackson, executive officer of APO #951. Music was furnished by an infantry band attached to the 7th AAF.

December 21, 1943

BRIEF ☆ 5



Source: Paul E. Adler  
Captioned and merged by Paul E. Adler

# 1940 Xmas Group Photo 42nd Bomber Sq. (Heavy)

Robert R. Garrett  
Killed 7 Dec. 1941

William C. Jones

B-18

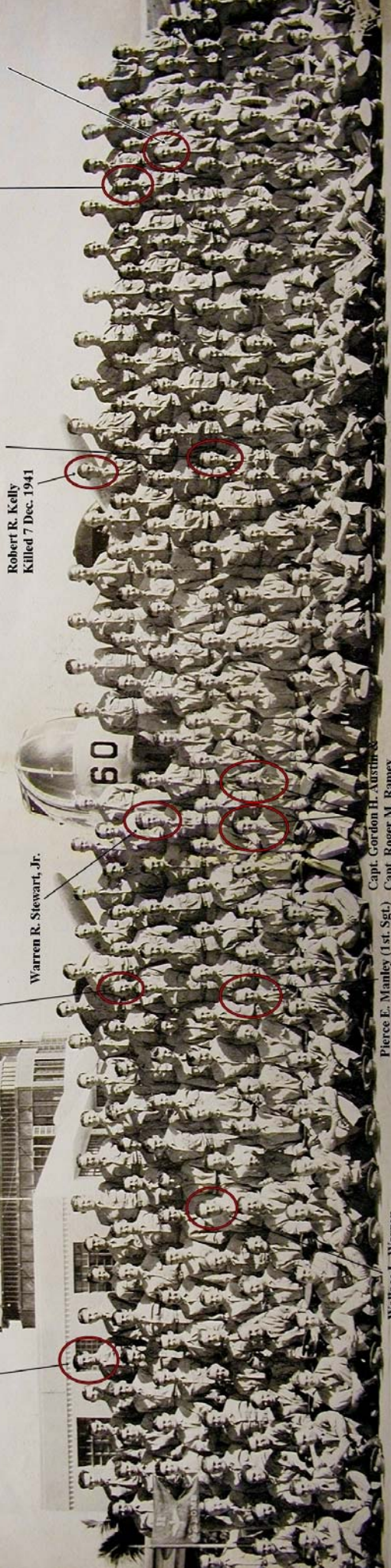
Warren R. Stewart, Jr.

James C. Stephens (Jimmy)  
Crew Member  
of 41-9151  
on Feb. 1, 1943

Robert R. Kelly  
Killed 7 Dec. 1941

Raymond A. Heilman  
Survived the War

Paul F. Adler  
Crew Member  
of 41-9151  
on Feb. 1, 1943



Capt. Gordon H. Austin  
Capt. Roger M. Ramsey

During the attack on Pearl Harbor (Dec. 7, 1941)  
9 members of the 42nd Bomb Squadron were  
killed and 12 were wounded.

**7 (\*) of those killed and  
12 (\*) of those wounded  
were in this 1940 Group Photo**

### OFFICERS

- Capt. Roger M. Ramsey, Air Corps, Commanding  
Capt. Gordon H. Austin, Air Corps  
1st Lt. Harry P. Leber, Jr., Air Corps  
1st Lt. Michael J. Coffield, Air Corps  
2nd Lt. Charles E. Gregory, Air Corps  
2nd Lt. Robert H. Stuart, Air-Res.  
2nd Lt. Edward C. Tents, Air-Res.  
2nd Lt. Ward Cox, Jr., Air-Res.  
2nd Lt. Warren S. Wilkinson, Air-Res.  
2nd Lt. John E. Henry, Air-Res.

### FIRST SERGEANT

- Pierce E. Manley  
William B. Brockway  
Carl Hoffman  
August A. Morian  
Lawrence E. Barnhart  
Robert G. Franks  
Elmer T. Lund  
Leonard R. Martin  
Walter Otis  
Dean G. Roth  
Anthony M. Salinardo  
Charles E. Scorsy  
Joseph B. Simpson  
George M. Smith, Jr.  
William F. Smith  
Harry Stanton  
Ceil B. Stanton  
William F. Storch  
Warren C. Williams  
Monte C. Williamson

### STAFF SERGEANTS

- William J. Brewster  
Roy Chamberlin  
William J. Dolchany  
Walter G. Eckel  
Homer E. Ferris  
Clyde M. Gilbert  
George L. Hilton  
William Hirsch  
George E. Hoffman  
Joseph Mack  
Marion L. Mardis  
Charles W. McCormick  
Elwood E. Miller  
Howard F. Nutting

### SERGEANTS

- Charles E. Bayer  
Theobald J. Brudney  
Edward M. Bryant  
Mathias E. Donart  
Conio A. Grieco  
Edward L. Hakes  
John H. Hanson  
Yemon A. Henderson  
William G. Hill  
Richard E. Holder  
Mike Markiewicz  
Alfred O. Oren  
Raymond R. Palmer  
Gene C. Riddle  
Robert M. Rigor  
Virgil F. Robertson  
William T. Rock  
Earl M. Severts  
William E. Spencer  
James D. Thompson  
Herbert A. Trost  
Paul W. Tuley  
Wallace L. Warren  
William G. Whatley

### CORPORALS

- Paul Adler  
Frank G. Ault, Jr.  
John B. Berry  
Luther F. Clark  
James Everett  
Charles J. Fulford  
James E. Halgyard  
Raymond A. Heilman  
Barford M. Henderson  
William L. Hotard  
Paul Kinnett, Jr.  
Charles M. Noble  
Everett F. Perkins, Jr.  
Luther L. Perry, Jr.  
Woodrow E. Portzline  
George R. Shafer  
Wallace E. Smith  
Warren R. Stewart, Jr.  
Rodney M. Stone  
Gilbert K. Whitmet  
James B. Winney  
Robert M. Woodruff

### PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

- Peter Charuk  
Theodore W. Conway  
William Coyne, Jr.  
Gene D. Crawford  
James H. Culver  
Eugene B. Davis  
Charles W. Denson  
Claude H. Durham  
William L. Dye  
Samuel Berger  
Robert L. Garrett  
Louis F. Gregory  
Constantine Hilehuk  
Edward Hudson  
Edmund T. Johnson  
Jacques Jous

### PRIVATE

- Meyer Levin  
Theodore C. Larezyk  
Roger E. Margeson  
Salvatore A. Mazzoni  
Albort C. McCall, Jr.  
Warren F. Morse  
James E. Norem  
Charles P. Porterfield  
James G. Poe  
Charles Y. Scarborough  
Floren K. Baker  
Alfred E. Barrett  
Albion V. Benley  
Paul T. Bowsher, Jr.  
Robert Brink  
Evelyst W. Capra  
Robert W. Chapman  
Roy K. Cook  
Fred S. Croyle  
Gilbert O. Dickerson  
Vernon W. Evans  
Patsy J. Falvo  
Thomas A. Field  
Robert W. Freeman  
Arthur A. Hebert, Jr.  
Charles L. Hrusceky  
William G. Jones  
George W. Knuffman  
Robert R. Kelley  
Charles W. Kennedy  
Hugh M. King  
Charles T. Kirk  
Rudolph Koseho  
Harold L. Krantz  
Marceus H. Lawson  
Frank M. Leonard  
Joseph G. Leonard  
Hymen Levin  
John M. Lewis  
John M. Lewis  
William E. Lindley  
Matheolm Lansk

### PRIVATE

- Pierce R. Luther  
Thatcher H. Lytes  
Ernest C. McCorkle  
John H. McGuire  
William C. McIntyre  
Fred H. McQuigg  
Gerald P. McRaven  
Herman E. Mead  
Willard L. Money  
Leith C. Morgan  
John F. Morris  
William L. Morris, Jr.  
John E. Muckey  
John R. Mullins  
Charles W. Narehood  
Roy L. Neathery  
Robert W. Noholt, Jr.  
William H. Nichols  
George W. Oakes  
Alvin M. Offord  
Keith R. Olson  
Bruce W. Osborne  
John G. Paige  
Harold W. Peel  
Hal H. Perry, Jr.  
E. C. Phillips, Jr.  
Frank P. Piorgo  
Taylor F. Pringle  
John H. Rimmer  
Casimir J. Slodki  
Edwin C. Smith  
Elmer L. Zeller



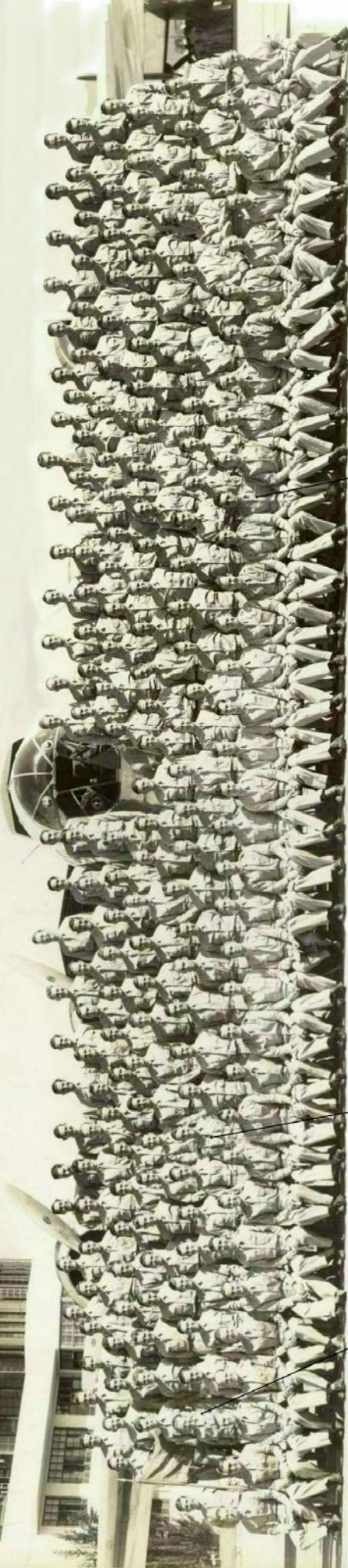
## Appendix 7

# 1940 Xmas Group Photo



1941 Xmas Group Photo  
42nd Bomber Sq. (Heavy)

B-17

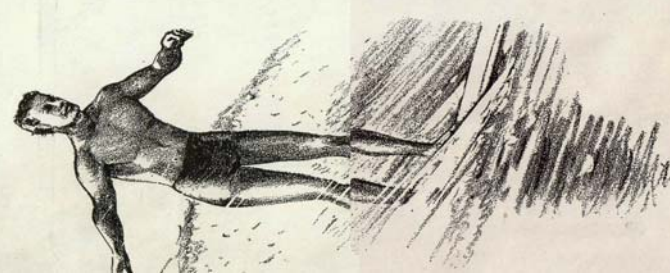


Raymond  
A. Hellman

Paul F.  
Adler

Joaquin  
Castro

- Captain Marshall R. Gray, Commanding  
Major Roger M. Ramey, Air Corps  
Captain Michael J. Coffield, Air Corps
- FIRST LIEUTENANTS**  
Charles O. Allan, Air Corps  
Ward Cox, Jr., Air Corps  
Walter L. Crumpton, Air Corps  
John E. Henry, Air Corps
- SECOND LIEUTENANTS**  
Owen K. Brown, Air Corps  
James W. Bushee, Air Corps  
Hobbs P. Hays, Air Corps  
Donald M. Hyland, Air Corps  
John M. Shea, Air Corps  
John M. Mengerowski, Air Corps  
Marshall E. Nelson, Air Corps  
Walter E. O'Brien, Air Corps  
Benjamin L. Parkinson, Air Corps  
Benjamin F. Paschall, III, Air Corps
- FLYING CADETS**  
Sydney O. Ingram, Jr., Air Corps  
Thornton H. Lewis, Air Corps
- MASTER SERGEANTS**  
Lawrence E. Barnhart  
Victor Berend  
William B. Brockway  
Jacob Collins
- FIRST SERGEANT**  
Monte C. Williamson
- TECHNICAL SERGEANTS**  
Elmer Anderson, Atchd.  
Robert W. Benzis, Atchd.  
John H. Chen, Atchd.  
Kathleen Lavette, Atchd.  
Charles W. McCormick
- STAFF SERGEANTS**  
Luther R. Bowles  
William J. Brewster
- PRIVATE FIRST CLASS**  
Howell S. Gerhardt  
Wilbur L. Gravit  
Louis F. Gregory  
Charles W. Hays  
Arthur A. Harbert, Jr.  
Leslie H. Hobbs  
Edward C. Hudson  
William C. Jones  
Jacques Joos  
Robert W. Kauffman  
George R. Kelley  
Frank M. Leonard  
Joseph G. Leonard  
Hymen Levitt  
Ivan C. Lewis  
Sobastian C. Maraschiello  
Albert C. McCull, Jr.  
John F. McCormick
- PRIVATE SERGEANT**  
Ernest A. Orjas  
Robert W. Ray  
Charles E. Seery, Atchd.  
William F. Smith, Atchd.  
Warren C. Williams
- PRIVATE FIRST CLASS**  
Eugene C. Achberger  
Charles F. Bailey  
William W. Bailey  
Florence K. Baker  
Charles W. Bartlett  
Bruce E. Beauséne  
Henry C. Beck  
Samuel Berger  
Alfred T. Bickman, Jr.  
Lawrence M. Bryan  
Paul E. Caporricio  
William C. Conway  
James A. O'Neil  
Eugene B. Denton  
Gilbert O. Dickerson  
William L. Dye  
Vernon W. Evans



Appendix 8

1941 Xmas Group Photo

- George F. Hoffman  
Nardlan S. Hoffman  
Joseph Mack  
Merian L. Mardis  
Mike Markiewith  
Elwood E. Miller  
Raymond R. Palmer
- SERGEANTS**  
Paul Adler  
Frank G. Ault, Jr.  
Charles E. Bayer  
John B. Berry  
Mathias M. Bryant  
John M. Perry, Jr.  
Edward L. Hakes  
John H. Hansen  
Raymond A. Hellman, Jr.  
Burford M. Henderson  
Arthur J. Hendricks
- CO PORALS**  
Leslie W. Barger  
Neal J. Barnes  
Alton E. Cain  
Gene D. Crawford  
Van Buren Cross  
Fred S. Coyne  
Leonard L. Simmons  
John P. Williams  
Henry E. Williams
- PRIVATE FIRST CLASS**  
Eugene C. Achberger  
Charles F. Bailey  
William W. Bailey  
Florence K. Baker  
Charles W. Bartlett  
Bruce E. Beauséne  
Henry C. Beck  
Samuel Berger  
Alfred T. Bickman, Jr.  
Lawrence M. Bryan  
Paul E. Caporricio  
William C. Conway  
James A. O'Neil  
Eugene B. Denton  
Gilbert O. Dickerson  
William L. Dye  
Vernon W. Evans
- PRIVATE FIRST CLASS**  
Hobell S. Gerhardt  
Wilbur L. Gravit  
Louis F. Gregory  
Charles W. Hays  
Arthur A. Harbert, Jr.  
Leslie H. Hobbs  
Edward C. Hudson  
William C. Jones  
Jacques Joos  
Robert W. Kauffman  
George R. Kelley  
Frank M. Leonard  
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Ivan C. Lewis  
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Leslie H. Hobbs  
Edward C. Hudson  
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Robert W. Kauffman  
George R. Kelley  
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Leslie H. Hobbs  
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George R. Kelley  
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Edward C. Hudson  
William C. Jones  
Jacques Joos  
Robert W. Kauffman  
George R. Kelley  
Frank M. Leonard  
Joseph G. Leonard  
Hymen Levitt  
Ivan C. Lewis  
Sobastian C. Maraschiello  
Albert C. McCull, Jr.  
John F. McCormick



## Appendix 9

**JOINT HEADQUARTERS  
5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUPS (H)  
FORWARD ECHELON, CACTUS**

**A-2 Periodic Report  
21 January 1943 – 28 February 1943**

Complete report of Second Element – Bombing Mission 1 February 1943.

The nine ship formation, composed of two elements, the first a five ship Vee, and the second a four ship Vee, took off from GUADALCANAL shortly after 0630 love for a bombing mission on enemy shipping in the SHORTLAND – BUIN area.

The pre-arranged plan was to bomb the transports in the SHORTLAND Harbor area, because it was known that a large force of destroyers and cruisers was just off the BUIN –KAHILI coast line. The first element was to take the transport to the right, and the second element the transport to the left.

Upon arrival at the target area the first element took up a bombing run on the transport to the right of the course of the formation. The second element started a bombing run on the left-hand transport, with bomb-bay doors open, but just before reaching the point of dropping the bombs made a right turn and laid a course directly toward the warships lying directly offshore from BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND.

At this time the warships, as well as the shore batteries opened up with anti-aircraft fire, the intensity of which was illustrated by the statement of the formation leader of the first element that the second element could not be seen because of the thickness of the box barrage that the anti-aircraft batteries were throwing up.

Despite the anti-aircraft, bombs were released, and the ball-turret gunner on Captain THOMAS's ship observed three hits on a transport.

The first element turned away to the left, after its run, and the second element turned away to the right, instead of staying with the first element, as previously planned. The pursuit escort of for P-38's and six P-40's stayed with the first element of five ships.

Over EAST POINT, on BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND, the four ship formation was attacked by 20 -30 type 2 Zero fighters, and the formation leader, Captain HALL, started towards WEST CAPE, CHOISEUL ISLAND, losing altitude.

Near CAPE ALEXANDER, Captain HOUX was seen falling behind, and was never seen again.

The remaining three planes, which had by now dropped down to an altitude of between a thousand and fifteen hundred feet, tried to take advantage of cloud protection, but the sky at this altitude was no more than 1/20<sup>th</sup> covered with small cumulous clouds, and offered practically no protection. It proved almost a hinderence, in as much as Captain HALL was making violent turns to right and left to take advantage of each cloud, which necessitated, on the part of Captain

THOMAS, putting one foot on the rudder bar to obtain enough leverage to make the turns and stay in the formation.

Captain THOMAS crossed over to the left, making a three ship echelon.

A few minutes later, on emerging from one of the larger clouds, Captain HALL's ship was not in the formation, and was nowhere in sight. This left Capt. THOMAS flying on Captain HENSLEY's wing.

All during this time, the large number of the Zero fighters were pressing their attacks, enabling them to come in from as many as four directions at once, making fire control very difficult.

Off RINGANA, on CHOISEUL ISLAND, Captain HENSLEY's plane was observed to be on fire, flames coming out of the radio compartment, perhaps the result of hits by incendiaries in the radio tank. His plane hit the water, exploded, and was burning when last observed. Two of the Zeros broke off and circled the wreckage.

This left Captain THOMAS's plane alone to keep up a running fight from RINGANA Point to the middle of SANTA ISABEL ISLAND, a distance of 210 statute miles, at which point the Zeros finally gave up the attack.

The bombardier, Lieut. HOWAT, firing one of the nose guns, was hit in the leg, but when an attack was called off as coming in at his position he dragged himself back to his gun to fire the nine rounds of ammunition he had left, accounting for the Zero, and receiving hits himself in his shoulder, elbow and hand.

The radio operator, Corporal P. J. MURPHY, manning one of the waist guns, was badly hit in the leg, but lay down on his back and kept passing up ammunition to the gunners until he was hit again in the same leg, resulting in a compound fracture of the left femur.

The tail gunner, Sgt. B.J.CULLINABE, had a stoppage on one of his guns, and then had the remaining gun stopped by a burst of fire coming from a Zero fighter which entered his side window, narrowly escaping his head, and causing minor abrasions from flying glass. He kept to his post for twenty minutes, pointing the useless guns at attacking Zeros, so as not to give away the vulnerability of his station. When Corporal MURPHY received his second hit, Sgt. CULLINABE came back and took over the second waist gun.

The ball-turret gunner, Sgt. T.L. WOLFE, had one gun jam, and immediately afterwards received a burst through the ball-turret that put the hydraulic control and the entire lower turret out of commission. He then left the ball-turret, after receiving wounds from the bursting shells in his hands, went forward, and manned the radio guns, until he ran out of ammunition.

Major W. H. McCARROLL, flight surgeon for the 44<sup>th</sup> fighter squadron, was also on the flight, and despite the heavy fire going on, made his way around the airplane, giving medical aid to Lieut. HOWAT in nose position, and putting a traction splint on Corporal MURPHY in waist position.

With the tail and ball-turret out of commission, and the nose and radio guns out of ammunition, the only defensive measures left to the pilot were turns into the attacking airplanes, and full throttle operation to try to out-run them.



About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the zeros were fighting with belly tanks still attached, which meant they were prepared to follow for some distance.

Handling the airplane was made more difficult by the fact that all of the trim tab control wires had been shot off, and the only way the nose could be kept down for level flight was by placing both knees or a foot on the steering column. Number one and number two engines had already been hit, and were dangerously close to complete failure.

The co-pilot, Lieut. INMAN, as hit by flying glass when shells struck the glass three inches behind the pilot's head.

After leaving the Zeros at SANTA ISABEL ISLAND, these two engines had to be favored, but Captain THOMAS didn't try to feather either one, despite the drag, for fear that a third might give out.

Over HENDERSON FIELD, GUADALCANAL, number one engine was smoking badly, and the propeller on number two engine had run away.

Landing was made on one flat tire, which was found to contain four or five Japanese shells, but the ship did not go off the runway. At the expense of burning out the other tire.

The ship and crew had sustained a continuous attack of over fifty minutes, and was the only ship of the four in the element to return.

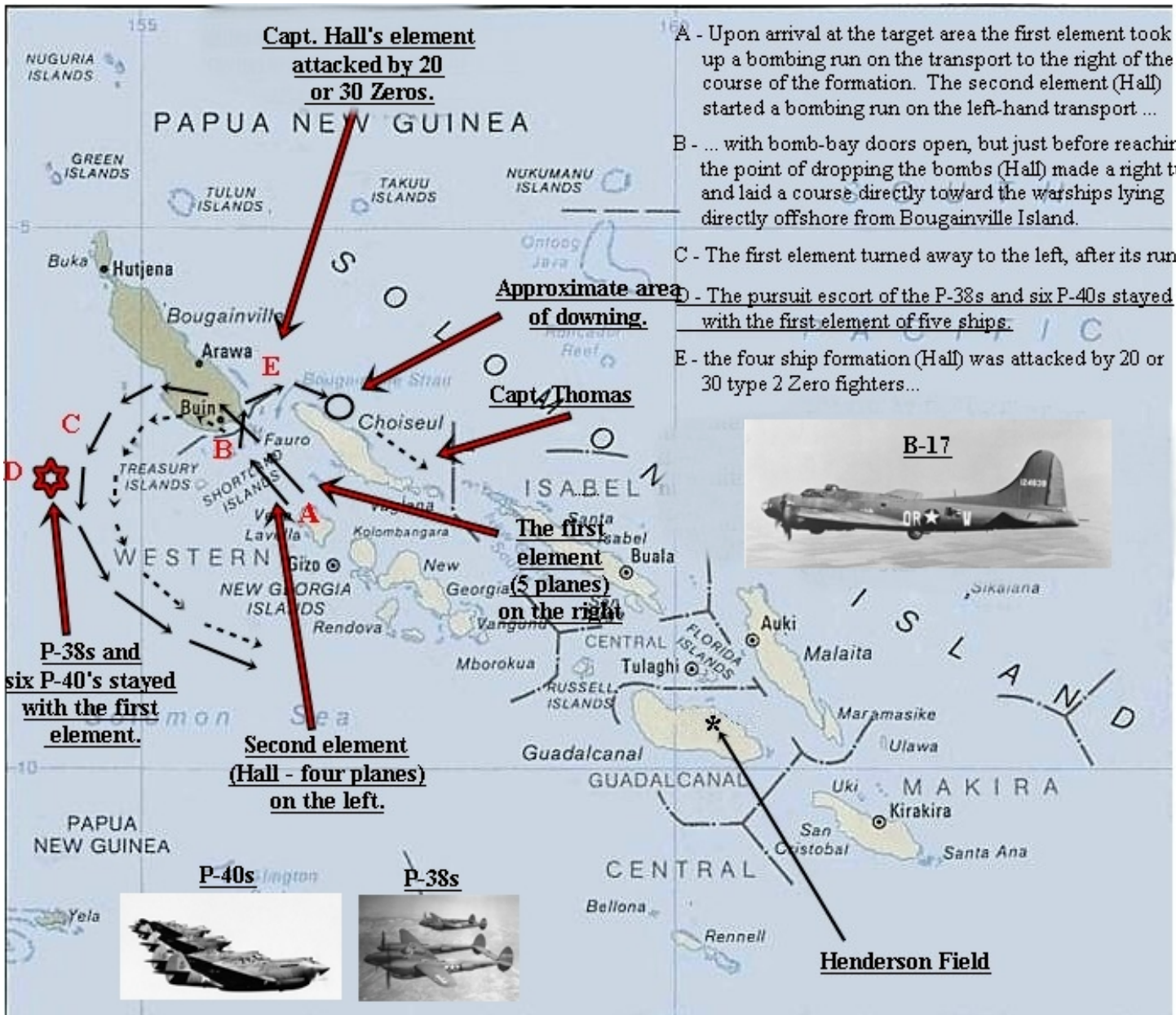
Four Zeros were observed by a coast watcher on CHOISEUL, to have been shot down while the four ships of the B-17 formation were still together.

During the time Captain THOMAS's ship was sustaining the attack alone, his crew accounted for three zeros and saw them crash into the water. Lieut. HOWAT is credited for the first, Sgt. WOLFE for the second, and Cpl. G. W. Ward, the other waist gunner, for the third.

CORCORAN THOM Jr.  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Air Corps  
S-2 Officer, CACTUS



## - Illustration of the A2 periodic Report -



## **- Troubling Questions – Hal Hall’s Replies, concerning the Last Mission -**

I asked Hal Hall, whom I consider to be the foremost expert regarding the last mission, to help me clear up two questions that had me confused:

**1 – Where did the last mission take place since early reports (MARC, etc.) states that the mission was over or near Munda on the NW end of New Georgia Island, not far from Gizo Island and the final A2 Report describes the action over/near Shortland / Bougainville Islands. What am I missing here?**

---

“You are not missing anything, except confusion of war, I think.

The A2 intelligence report clearly says Shortland Harbor, but the MARC document clearly says Munda Point. My Dad heard reports that Munda was the target, and others that indicated other targets.

I talked by phone with a member of the crew of the first flight, and he reports firsthand that they were bombing Shortland. He has no idea why the flights split up.

We had a family tradition that arose from the many reports from servicemen, that said Earl's plane went down 600 miles from the nearest island, and was last seen settling slowly toward the water. Problem with that is the distance - given either target, they would not have gone 600 miles out into the open Pacific after a long mission, if for no other reason than the lack of fuel. So, I would expect that Bale's father was hearing the same stories my Dad heard, (page 72) and those stories were second, third, or fourth hand, with a lot of chance for misunderstandings.

One of my cousins, many years ago, tried to get answers for us. He was an Air Force Colonel, and talked to a lot of people, but he could never get any clear idea of who was right in the stories they told. He finally gave up the effort.

If you look at the map, It is conceivable that both are correct, since a right turn over Choiseul Island and a run across the slot could take a plane over Gizo. I think a couple of things make that less likely. First, it would be turning back into the strength of the Japanese air force - not the best choice. Second, Zeros that had been attacking the Fortress from Shortland, over Choiseul, and then on to Gizo would probably be out of fuel completely. Some of us have considered this before, with no firm conclusion.

I tend to go with the best evidence available, and the two items I rely on are the A-2 report, interviewing the one remaining pilot of the flight of four, and the comments of the one crewman on the mission that I could locate. So far, I have had no luck finding the Coast Watcher's transcript for that battle, but the National Archives has it in as a request, and that may turn up something.

Barring some new hard evidence, I'll stay with the Shortland mission as the most likely.”

Hal Hall

---

## 2 – Why would Capt. Hall have turned right, instead of left as planned.

---

“To answer your last question - I have no idea why the second flight (Capt. Hall’s group) made that right turn.

I can speculate, but only out of whole cloth - I have seen nothing that gives me any clue about that "Why," so all my conjectures are without any evidence.

That said, a few more thoughts. Almost certainly, the mission commander was the command pilot in the first flight (element) of the mission. I don't know anything about the first flight, but will start (again) to research and see if there is anything available on it. If that is correct, then the second flight (element) would have been under command control of the mission commander, and would have followed orders to turn toward a new target. From a B-17, it would have been easy for an observer to have mistaken a cruiser for a battleship, or a perhaps even a carrier, although that is unlikely. A battleship, or cruiser and tenders, would have been a higher-priority target, certainly.

It is certainly possible that Earl was the command pilot of the mission, but I have no info that confirms that, either.

In any case, I think it is safe to speculate that they saw something that was sufficiently important that an on-the-spot command decision would be made to change targets. We just don't know what they saw.

Alas, I guess we will always wonder about that.

Hal (Hall)

---

Both replies satisfied my concerns regarding the location of the last mission and a very plausible explanation for Capt. Hall’s “right turn.”

However, I still don’t understand why at least some of the escort fighters did not also turn right to provide protection for Capt. Hall’s element.

I suppose that a very important part of “closure” in the lost of a loved one is the knowledge of the cause of death.

The AG-704 report (page 73, paragraph 4) considers the possibility that crewmembers were taken prisoners, however, it rightly indicates that there simply is insufficient information to make such a determination.

Possibly the source of some of the confusion regarding this mission, is information passed on to the fathers of three of the crewmembers of B-17E No. 41-9151.

## Appendix 10

### Letter from Mr. Frank N. Stern Sr. to Paul's Father



HOTEL SHORELAND  
FIFTY-FIFTH STREET AT THE LAKE  
CHICAGO 15

Wednesday  
September 27th  
1944

Mr. Alfred A. Adler  
16 Forest Street  
Cambridge 40, Mass.

Dear Mr. Adler:

We received a report from the War Department mentioning your boy's name as a member of the same crew as my son and also a letter from Captain Hall's father.

Sometime in 1943 a young flyer called me and I had lunch with him and he described the action as he saw it. He seemed to be of the opinion that two of the planes that were lost dropped on the water, but that the plane that your son was on came down on Choiseul Island. It seems to me that later I heard of paratroopers going on to that island and came out having found nothing. That is about all that I have heard until we received the notice from the War Department. Naturally we feel that if the government still have hopes for our boys that we should, and we too are praying for the return of all these boys. It seems that this crew were very close to each other and thought a lot of every member.

Allow us to extend to you our deepest sympathy and let us pray that all these boys will come back to their homes.

If you should ever be in Chicago, it would indeed be a pleasure to meet you.

Sincerely,

*Frank Stern*

FS-G



## Appendix 11

### Letter from Mr. H. T. Hall to Paul's Father

Gold  
Bond

**NATIONAL GYPSUM COMPANY**  
**--BLUEBONNET-ORDNANCE-PLANT--**  
**INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

Gold  
Bond

To:

Subject: Crawford, Texas.

Date: 10/2/44.

Mrs, Alfred A. Adler,  
16 Forest Street,  
Suite 4 Cambridge 40, Mass.

Dear Mrs. Adler, & Family;

Your nice letter came to day, We appreciate it so much, for there is so much consolation in knowing that you people and Paul's wife pray for, believe in and expect their return, as we do.

There are lots of things I want to say to you people ~~to you~~ to nite, however I am <sup>on</sup> duty at a defence plant trying to watch the typewriter with one eye and the job with the other, so please bear with me if I call the wrong number.

I know those boys were close to gather which is the natural way where each one knows that he holds the fate of the crew in his hand and must do his job well.

Earl was very fond of his crew and had so much to say about-~~he~~ how well they could get their job done, his attitude seemed to be that the boys deserved all the credit and he just happened to be along.

It seems to me that it is almost unreasonable that a baby boy could <sup>come</sup> so near seeing his father as Paul's did and then for ever be denied that priviledge, they will come back they just must.

I consider it a very great honer when some one names a child for ~~them~~ and I wish to thank every one who had a part in nameing Paul Earl, and I sincerely hope that he can see his Father in the near futurer then can grow to be a man that can honer the two brave men he was named for.

I hope that all three of your boys will come back to you safe and happy, We have only the one boy in the service,

Earl's Mother died when he was only 14 yrs. old and if she had survived that dreadful operation I dont be lieve she could have stood this, she was never very strong, and like all Mothers was very fond of her kiddies.

Earl has one sister  $3\frac{1}{2}$  yrs. younger than he is who lives out in western part of Texas, she has a little girl that we are very fond of.

A few yrs. after his Mothers death I married a second time a very close friend to his Mother, and I must say here that he and his sister were not denied by far all the blessings a Mother could give, though no one can take the place of Mother.

He has a half sister and a little brother 3yrs. old as much like him as can be that he has never seen.

I made a 500 mile trip to find the boy I talked to, I will tell you as near as I can just what he said, please dont tell where you got this information and if a high up should try to question you dont tax your memery to hard for he was very skeptical a bout talkin

He had just married a day or two before but I got him away from his young wife and talked to him about one hour, he will never know how much I appreciated that hour.

There were eight planes started out from Gaudalcanal to bomb a target on Rendova Is. two formations of four planes each, our boys in the front plane, the boy I talked was in second formation, over

*Safe, Efficient Production Hastens Axis Destruction*

10/2/44

They flew over the target, and as you may know the front bomber takes the sight for all the formation, for some reason the bombs were not released, that left the whole formation with their bombs, they circled and came in behind the second formation, all released their bombs, by that time the ack, ack, hit them and the Zeroes were ready, they fought for several miles before they fought the Japs off, the three planes were burning but not bad, they began to loose altitude but made a good landing on the water and he thought they could have gotten the rafts, the next day a searching plane went out but could find nothing, there were six rafts and I believe if those boys had not ridden those rafts away some of them would have been in sight.

But as you said these 20 mos. on an island would be bad, I believe the one who doeth all things well would provide for them to exist.

In Jap hands I dont know.

One more thing I ment to tell you, Earl was to have been married 24th of Dec. 41 his girl was to sail the 12th but her pass port was canceled before she left Waco.

The War Dpt. sent me a list of the next of kin was the way I got your address, I have written to all and have heard from six so far.

If you dont receive it and want the addresses I will send them to you I sent them to my daughter at Sweet Water but they will be back soon.

I think we should all keep in touch with each other for some of those boys will be heard from and if I cant have my <sup>boy</sup> I want to see and talk to the ones that do return.

I did not make my self clear as to location, it was 125 or 150 miles s-w of New Georgia directly a cross Rendova.

Earl's allotment still comes to Bank for deposit, and War Dpt. notified me in March that the bal. was being deposited to his credit.

We appreciate your letters very much and want you or Mr. Adler to write us any time you can.

I hope I have not detained you to long.

Sincerely

H.T.Hall.

for Mr. Hall  
10/2/44

## Appendix 12

### **1944 - Staff Sergeant James C. Stephens' brother (Paul) shared the following information:**

Here is some information that was passed onto me by my brother Art who is ten years older than myself. It concerns some of the correspondence that has recently been flowing between members of the group. I'm not sure if this adds to the confusion or not but I thought that it was important to pass on. The only reason that this person would have had the information that he gave to our father was because he was either on Capt. Thomas's surviving plane or he talked to one of those crew members. I suppose there is a chance that the source of this story could have actually been more correct than the version in the A-2 report.

(Beginning of Art's information)

I don't know the others you are involved with on the project to trace the last moments of the flight. Perhaps you would like to pass this information on to the others that you have been corresponding with. I believe his last name was Smith. It was probably 1944 because I believe the war was still on. He was Jim's tent mate. He stated clearly that Jim's plane was observed landing on the water and that the fires appeared to be under control. That would have been Hall's plane, correct. I am doing my best to reconstruct this interview that Dad took me to at the home of this individual in Grand Junction but you have to understand that I was only 14 at the time. The individual that Dad took me with him to interview stated that if Jim had survived that mission he would have been rotated back to the States to serve in an aircrew training capacity. That is the reason that the individual that we talked to had been sent back to the States before the end of the war.

## Appendix 13

### Airmen Meet with Fathers, AG-704 Conclusions Regarding Cause of Death

#### Sometime in 1943: (Appendix 10)

Mr. Frank Stern, the father of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Frank N. Stern, the navigator on the last mission wrote to Paul's father that he had lunch with a young flyer who described the action "AS HE SAW IT." (This would make the flyer a member of Capt. Thomas's crew.)

His opinion was that two of the planes dropped in the water, but that Capt. Hall's plane went down on Choiseul Island. He heard later that paratroopers landed on the island and found nothing.

---

#### Mid or late 1944: (Appendix 11)

Mr. H. T. Hall, the father of Capt. Earl O. Hall, the pilot of aircraft 41-9151 also wrote to Paul's father saying he made a 500- mile trip to talk to an airman. He advised Paul's father not to disclose where he got this information. The airman was very skeptical about talking. (This puzzles me.)

This airman said he was in the second formation with our boys in the front plane. Capt. Hall's four planes made up the second formation of the mission. (Therefore this airman also seems to have been a member of Capt. Thomas's crew)

The airman states that when they got over the target (which were transports in a harbor) for some reason the bombs were not dropped. (This is confirmed in the A2 Periodic Report, which also stated that there were very little clouds over the area that day.) "They circled and came in behind the second formation, all released bombs, by that time the ack ack and zeros hit them." (Circling around and coming in behind the "second formation" leads me to think that Capt. Thomas's plane was last, behind the other three planes after circling.) he continues: "the three planes were burning but not bad .. but made a good landing on the water." (If he was a part of the first element, which had turned left, I believe he wouldn't have been able to see what was happening to the three planes.) Also, he thought they could have gotten the (six) rafts. He said that the next day a searching plane went out and found nothing. (The MACR report indicates that the extent of the search was "Routine" and that the location of the search was Munda Point, which is approximately 20 miles from Rendova.) The airman added that the location was 125 or 150 miles SW of New Georgia, directly across Rendova. New Georgia is quite a ways south of Bougainville Island where the A2 Periodic Report states that Capt. Hall sighted the war ships. (Surely Capt. Thomas and the pilots of the first element as well as the escorts confirmed that the targets were at the south end of Bougainville, far to the NW. Was the routine search the next day, probably using the MACR, even conducted in the right location?

The A2 Periodic Report mentions nothing about circling around for a second run at the targets.



### **Sometime in 1944: (Appendix 12)**

Art Stephens, the brother of Staff Sgt. James (Jim) C. Stephens, Radio Man, went along with his dad to talk to a tent-mate of Jim's in Grand Junction. He believes the tent-mate's name was Smith.

The tent-mate stated clearly that Jim's plane was observed landing on the water and that the fires appeared to be under control. If Jim's tent-mate and the young man who talked to Mr. Hall were not the same person, then two young men thought that Capt. Hall's plane landed on the water.)

---

The A2 Periodic Report, which was created from interviews with Capt. Thomas's crew, surely wasn't written within 48 hours of Capt. Thomas's return, as was the requirement of the MACR. The report indicates that search planes the next day as well as paratroopers on Choiseul Is. all found nothing. But if the airman who spoke with Mr. Hall was correct, should they have been searching in and around Munda Point and Rendova?

It's very difficult for me to believe that even if a B-17 drove straight into the water that there wouldn't be any signs of it what so ever such as: anything that could float, paper, rafts even if they were not deployed, fuel or oil slicks and even bodies. In this case, not just one B-17, but THREE. **EVERYTHING** seems to have simply disappeared!

Could the Japanese have removed all evidence of the three planes over night?

## Appendix 14

### AG-704 Investigation: Dated April 27, 1949

This document (not included entirely) is a **Review of Circumstances Surrounding the Disappearance of Personnel Presumed Dead.**

The document identifies the target area as Munda Point, which is on the northwest end of New Georgia, just above Rendova. It claims to even confirm this with a letter from S. Sgt. James Y. Bales's father. James Bales was the bombardier on Capt. Hall's plane.

As stated by Hal Hall (page 62), as a result of his extensive research, The AG-704 is incorrect. The targets were located at Shortland as given in the A2 Periodic Report.

However, the AG-704 report pg. 4, para. 4, does conclude that:

“4. The 27 officers and enlisted men listed ... composed the crews of three B-17 bombers lost over Japanese controlled territory on 1 February 1943, exact place and cause of loss unknown. Only hearsay reports are available, and those are rather vague.

It is well known that many airmen lost in this area were rescued by the enemy, only to die at some later date of diseases or mistreatment, and never reported as prisoners or deceased by their captors.

In the absence of more definite evidence as to the exact date, place and cause of death of subject personnel, it is believed that information on hand in the Department of the Army at this time is not sufficient to justify the issuance of official reports of death, pursuant to the provisions of Section 9 of the Missing Persons Act.”

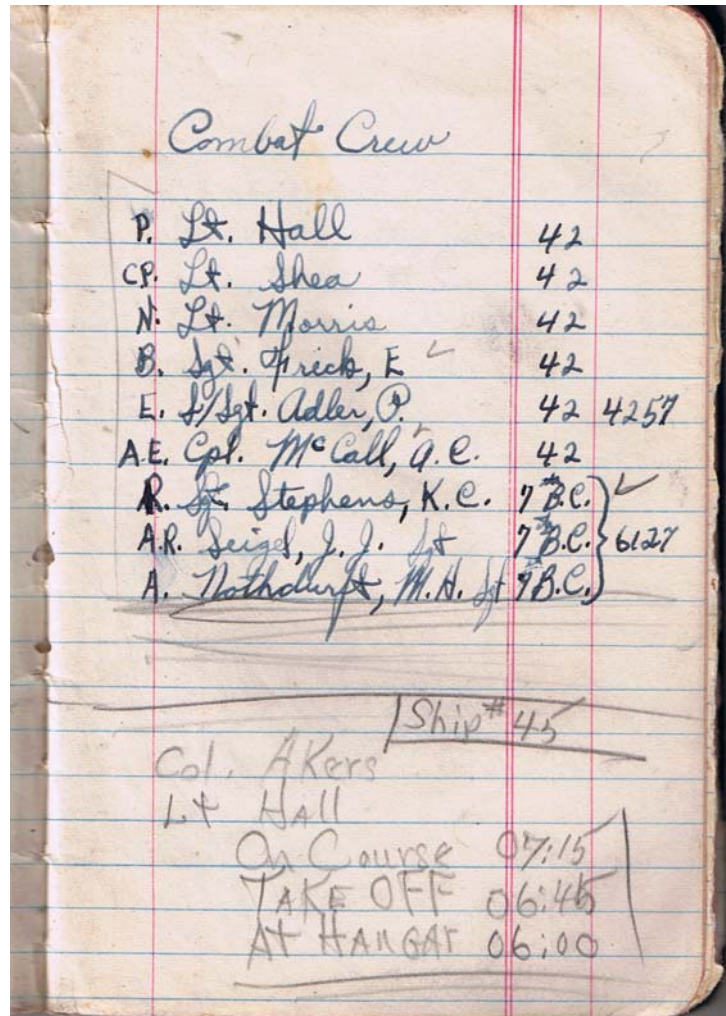
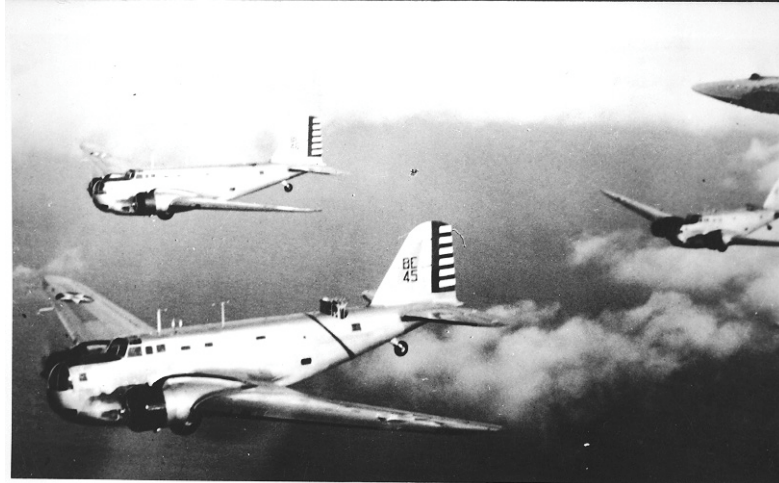
As Hal Hall so accurately stated:

“Alas, I guess we will always wonder about that.” ... and many other aspects of the **Last Mission** in which our relatives were **Lost in the Pacific.**

## Appendix 15

### Other Crews and Aircraft

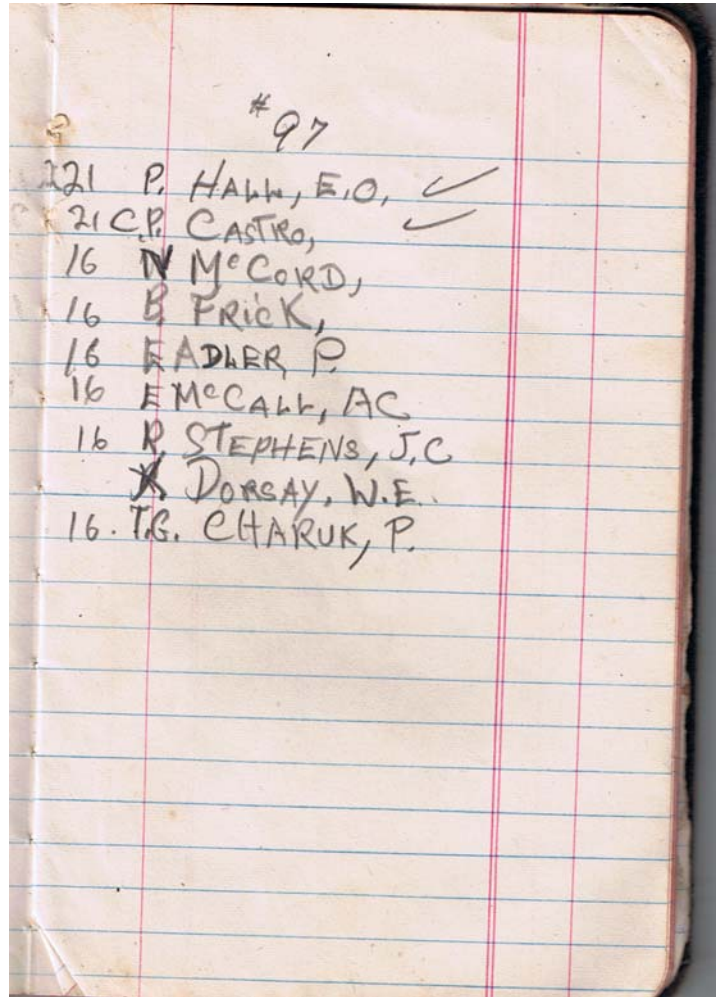
Dad kept an informal notebook that he apparently forgot with mom while he was with her in Jan. 1943, which contains some information on other crews and aircraft that he was a part of. During the war and especially with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron in the very early stages of the war in the Pacific, it wasn't unusual for crews to be made up of whomever were available when needed. Flight personal even flew on different aircraft from time to time.



BE-18 #45



As an Engineer, dad undoubtedly flew on many of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron's B-18s and B-17s. Only 307 B-18s were produced as early as 1935.



**BE-18 #97**  
**Mid Nov. 1941**

The Boeing B-17E aircraft was first produced in Sept. 1941, 512 B-17Es were produced.



Airplane Model: B-17E  
 A.C. Serial No. 41-2443  
 DATE Purchased: 12-3-41

Crew Chief:

| Crew Chief:   |        | DATE     |
|---------------|--------|----------|
| PLANETA, A.M. | M/SGT. | 12-21-41 |

ASSISTANTS:

|                |        |          |         |
|----------------|--------|----------|---------|
| ADLER, PAUL    | S/SGT. | 12-21-41 |         |
| CROYNE, FRED.  | S/SGT. | 12-21-41 | 3-10-42 |
| MAIRE, G.M.    | P.F.C. | 12-21-41 | 3-10-42 |
| MALLOY, E.J.   | P.F.C. | 12-21-41 |         |
| ARCHBERGER, E. | Cpl.   | 12-30-41 |         |
| ATCHEE, H.     | Pvt.   | 3-2-42   |         |
| NOLAN, R.F.    | Cpl.   | 2-16-42  |         |
| BAER, C.D.     | P.F.C. | 2-16-42  |         |

ENG. A.C. SERIAL NUMBERS

(1) 41-22478      (2) 41-22482  
 (3) 41-22504      (4) 41-22506  
 R-1820-65<sup>s</sup>

B-17E 41-2443

## Appendix 16

### Outline of TSgt. Paul F. Adlers' Military Career

June 3, 1939 Enlisted in the **Army Air Corps** at **Fort McArthur, NY** No. 6147915 Age 21.

June 8, 1939 Arrived at **Fort Slocum, NY**, **1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Co. Section 3** Bldg. 83-S (Pvt. Paul F. Adler)

July 21, 1939 **U. S. A. Transport ship, Hunter Liggett to Hawaii**

Aug. 17, 1939 **18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group, 6<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Section, 18<sup>th</sup> Air Base, Wheeler Field, Hawaii**



Oct. 10, 1939 **17<sup>th</sup> Air Base Squadron, Hickam Field**

Jan. 19, 1940 **50<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, Hickam Field**



Feb. 17, 1940 **7<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 11<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy), 42<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Squadron, Hawaiian Air Force, Hickam Field**



July of 1942 **Plaines des Gaiacs, New Caledonia**

August 1942 **Henderson Field, Guadalcanal**

Feb. 1, 1943 **His last mission out of Henderson Field. Age 25**



## Appendix 17

# History of the 11<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group in the South Pacific

<http://www.nettally.com/jrube/text/airwar.txt>

**Hickam Field Tower  
1939**



## **Appendix 18**

### **To the Texas A&M University Library**

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Texas A&M University Library for hosting this and other biographies of the crew of B-17 No. 41-9151 of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron.

By your generosity, the memories, achievements and sacrifices of these men will not be forgotten.

May all of them, Earl, Joaquin, Paul, Frank, James Y., James C., Jesse, Francis and Martin, who gave their lives for their country, rest in peace.

Paul Earl Adler  
Roseville, CA

August 20, 2010

## Appendix 19

### *“Lost in the Pacific”*

#### Credits

My sincere gradatude goes out to the following individuals for their help and support in this project:

My friend **Hal Hall** for his many years of research on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron and the Last Mission and for his generosity in sharing this research with me.

My Cousin **Bart Wilson** for his patience in relating dad’s boyhood character, family history, and stories provided by his mother, dad’s only sister, Dear **Aunt Hazel Wilson**.

My Cousin **Sigrid Lambert** for her diligence in searching for and providing documents that her father Uncle **Karl Adler**, dads’ twin brother kept stored away for more than six decades.

My wife **Leslie**, for her unending love and support as well as her expertise in editing.